Special Education

M.S. Degree Program

Graduate Student Handbook

DEPARTMENT OF

COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY AND

SPECIAL EDUCATION

David O. McKay School of Education

Brigham Young University

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# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

# PROGRAM HANDBOOK

## About This Handbook

This handbook details the policies, procedures, expectations, and resources for graduate students in the Special Education (SPED) Master of Science (M.S.) program. This version supersedes and replaces all previous SPED M.S. program memos, updates, and handbook versions. You will be notified of any changes in policies and procedures. You are responsible to meet the policies noted in the most recent version of the handbook.

When you were admitted, you met the requirements of the program as it was established at the time of your admission; however, you have the option of completing the program requirements under which you were admitted or choosing the newer set of program requirements—should they change while you are in the program. The contact person for this handbook is the SPED Graduate Coordinator:

Dr. Cade Charlton BCBA, LBA

340-N McKay Building

Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah 84602

(801) 422-1238

[cade\_charlton@byu.edu](mailto:cade_charlton@byu.edu)

## David O. McKay School of Education Departments and Programs

The David O. McKay School of Education (MSE) is one of eight Schools/Colleges within the university that prepares educators and the department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education is one of five educator preparation programs in the MSE. The other four departments include: Teacher Education, Educational Leadership and Foundations, Instructional Psychology and Technology, and Communication Disorders.

Recently the McKay School of Education is nationally ranked at 78 in the U.S. News & World Report (2019 Edition). Rankings are based on expert opinion about program quality and statistical indicators that measure the quality of a school’s faculty, research, and students.

## The Brigham Young University - Public School Partnership (BYU-PSP)

The Brigham Young University-Public School Partnership is a joint venture between the University and the School Districts of [Alpine](http://alpineschools.org/), [Jordan,](http://www.jordandistrict.org/) [Nebo,](http://www.nebo.edu/) [Provo](http://www.provo.edu/) and [Wasatch.](http://www.wasatch.edu/) This partnership was founded in 1983 and is a setting of the [National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER).](http://www.nnerpartnerships.org/) The foundational principle of the NNER and the BYU-Public School Partnership is the improvement of public education which requires universities and public schools to work simultaneously to affect positive change in teacher education and student learning. The participating districts include about one third of Utah’s school children (approximately 160,000 students) and employ over 7,000 teachers. Brigham Young University annually graduates over 1,000 teachers and about 40 administrative candidates.

The facilitating arm for the initiatives of the BYU-PSP is the [Center for the Improvement of Teacher](https://education.byu.edu/cites) [Education and Schooling (CITES).](http://education.byu.edu/cites/index.html) A Governing Board directs the BYU-PSP and constitutes each Superintendent of the five participating school districts, the Dean of the McKay School of Education, and the Executive Director of CITES. This Board collectively identifies the areas of need that can be most effectively addressed by the combined efforts of the University and the School Districts. The CITES office is located in the McKay Building on the BYU campus.

# ALLIANCE WITH GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE

The Graduate Studies (GS) office works with the department to recruit, admit, and support students through their graduate programs. Also, GS makes sure the applicable University requirements are met. You can refer to their website for information about admissions, program of study, program progress reports, grade point average requirements, deferrals or leave of absence, credit limits, graduation requirements, etc. See the GS webpage for [policies and procedures](https://graduatestudies.byu.edu/content/policies-and-procedures) for more information.

## Graduate Progress System

The Graduate Studies office maintains the Graduate Progress system. Students use this system to move through each of the milestones of their program requirements: Advisory Committee, Program of Study, Thesis Defense Scheduling, ETD Submission and Approval. Students may access their individual Graduate Progress page at <https://gradprogress.sim.byu.edu/>

# UNIVERSITY STANDARDS AND POLICIES

## BYU Statement on Belonging

We are united by our common primary identity as children of God (Acts 17:29; Psalm 82:6) and our commitment to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (BYU Mission Statement). We strive to create a community of belonging composed of students, faculty, and staff whose hearts are knit together in love (Mosiah 18:21) where:

* All relationships reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor (BYU Mission Statement);
* We value and embrace the variety of individual characteristics, life experiences and circumstances, perspectives, talents, and gifts of each member of the community and the richness and strength they bring to our community (1 Corinthians 12:12–27);
* Our interactions create and support an environment of belonging (Ephesians 2:19); and
* The full realization of each student’s divine potential is our central focus (BYU Mission Statement).

## McKay School Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education, the David O. McKay School of Education, and Brigham Young University are committed to preparing teacher candidates to serve effectively in a diverse society and to promote respect for individual differences. In the CPSE Department, we value and respect every person and seek to promote multicultural competence. Consequently, we need to take steps to listen to, learn from, and respect one another, such as proactively considering others’ views and persisting to find common ground and mutually beneficial solutions when differences inevitably occur. Awareness of "the gift of personal dignity for every child of God”(i) includes seeing both similarities and differences without simplification, overgeneralization, or minimization of historical and ongoing oppression – with an explicit intent to “eliminate any prejudice, including racism, sexism, and nationalism(ii)…regardless of age, personal circumstances, gender, sexual orientation, or other unique challenges.”(iii) Our aim of interpersonal unity and collective wellbeing requires welcoming diverse perspectives and experiences as we “work tirelessly to build bridges of understanding.”(iv) Achieving the ultimate unity we seek, a Zion community, entails genuine efforts to maintain mutual trust, fostered by principles of equity, charity, collaboration, and inclusiveness. If you witness actions or intentions counter to these objectives, we request that you please kindly share your perspectives with those involved rather than remain silent, and if we faculty are part of the problem, we invite you to speak with us, the department chair, or college dean. When you witness actions supportive of inclusion or indicative of multicultural competence, please also share those positive observations to foster a synergistic climate in our program.

## General Honor Code Statement

Brigham Young University exists to provide a university education in an atmosphere consistent with

the ideals and principles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Specific policies embodied in the Honor Code include (1) the Academic Honesty Policy, (2) the Dress and Grooming Standards, (3) the Residential Living Standards, and (4) the Continuing Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement Requirement. See the [Honor Code](https://honorcode.byu.edu/) website.

## Continuing Ecclesiastical Endorsement

You are required to have a Continuing Student Ecclesiastical Endorsement for each academic year in which you wish to register for any university credit. This includes thesis hours, internships, or off- campus programs. See the [Continuing Ecclesiastical Endorsement instructions.](https://honorcode.byu.edu/ecclesiastical-endorsements)

*If you are not LDS*, you may be endorsed by the local leader of your preferred religious denomination or by the bishop of the LDS ward boundaries in which you live.

## Preventing Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education, programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. Please see information that defines sexual harassment as inappropriate gender-based behavior and recommends actions that you can take to deal with such behavior at the following location: [Unlawful Gender Discrimination, Unlawful Sexual Harassment and Inappropriate Gender- Based Behavior](https://titleix.byu.edu/)

## Students with Disabilities Policy

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have a disability, please see [University Accessibility Center](http://uac.byu.edu/) for information about resources, guidelines, orientation, and technology.

## BYU Fingerprint Background Clearance & Photo ID Policy

Inherent in all BYU education programs and numerous research projects conducted by the BYU campus community is the requirement to access public and private schools. There are mandated safeguards that monitor access to school children by non-school personnel. In compliance with State law and a mutual agreement between BYU and BYU Partnership school districts, the following policy is in effect: BYU faculty, staff, and students must now be properly identified with a BYU Educator Preparation Program (EPP) ID card and provide evidence of fingerprint background clearance before accessing public/private K-12 schools in both partnership and non-partnership schools. BYU Fingerprinting Background Clearance must be maintained throughout your enrollment in the program.

*If you have NOT previously had a teaching license with the State of Utah* go to the McKay School of Education Student Services website to learn what you do for [Fingerprint Background](https://education.byu.edu/advisement/fingerprint) [Clearance.](http://education.byu.edu/ess/fingerprint.html)

# ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT POLICIES

## Transfer Credit

With department and university approval, transfer, senior, and post-baccalaureate studies credit may be applied toward the degree according to the individual criteria listed below. The maximum number of transfer credit hours should constitute no more than 25 percent of the total hours required for the program, not to exceed 15 credit hours in any program. Consult the section “Credit Policies” in the Graduate Studies Catalog for further information.

The minimum standard for transferring credit from another university is a “B” and content must be comparable to the equivalent BYU course. Application for transfer credit, including a transcript and

course syllabus, must accompany the required “Program of Study” proposal form before obtaining signatures. An official transcript must accompany requests for transfer credit. You must identify the course and credit you expect to transfer, noting which course you wish to substitute using the transfer credit. Requests for transferring credit are reviewed by the Advisory Committee and the Graduate Coordinator.

## GPA Requirements

The BYU Graduate Catalog specifies that a grade point average (GPA) at or above 3.0 in classes that are part of a student’s “graduate program of study” is required for graduation. This GPA is also required for continuation in the Special Education M.S. Program. Grades below B will be reviewed by the faculty during end-of-semester evaluations. No D credit may apply toward a graduate degree.

## Minimum Registration Requirement

All degree-seeking graduate students are required to meet the minimum registration requirements. Minimum registration is six credit hours per year, plus:

* You must register for and complete at least 2 credit hours your first semester of graduate study.
* You must be registered for at least 2 semester hours when working on campus (which includes graduate assistantships).
* You must be registered for at least 2 hours during the semester of your thesis defense. (Spring and summer terms are counted together as being a single semester for these registration requirements.)
* You must earn acceptable grades (maintain >3.0 GPA) during each academic year (September 1 to August 20) to remain eligible to register in any semester of the following school year.

If you fail to meet these registration requirements, you will lose your registration eligibility. If you wish to continue, [Form 6: Application to Resume Graduate Study](https://gradstudies.byu.edu/file/gs-form-6) must be submitted to the special education department. Students applying for readmission can expect their previous course work to be re-evaluated and, where appropriate, the requirements for their degrees may be revised to reflect current requirements. Readmission is not automatic, as the student is reviewed anew by the department for acceptance or denial to continue the graduate program.

## Progress Toward Graduation

The M.S. program is designed to be completed in two years. The university allows a maximum of five years from your admission acceptance date to complete a master’s degree only if a student is making satisfactory progress toward graduation during that time. Progress is defined as acceptably passing classes, progressing toward thesis completion, and passing the final oral exam. Your progress toward degree completion is evaluated by the graduate faculty twice per year, shortly after the end of the semester (See student progress report below).

## Time Limit

Work to meet the two-year plan. The absolute time limit in which you must complete your degree is five years after your first admission acceptance date. Transfer and non-degree seeking credit are also subject to the above time limits. It is your responsibility to monitor the time limit.

## Leave of Absence

You may request a leave of absence for the following reasons: medical, military, or mission. The five-year limit for the master’s degree will still apply. While on leave, you will NOT be responsible for:

* Minimum Registration (6 hours per academic year)
* Satisfactory progress in the program (two evaluations per academic year)

Departments are not required to evaluate students for satisfactory progress during the leave period.

Students requesting a leave must submit the [Leave of Absence Form](https://gradstudies.byu.edu/file/adv-form-5) as well as one of the following:

**Medical:** letter from the doctor/therapist that includes the amount of time away recommended by the professional.

**Military:** copy of the military assignment that includes the length of the assignment

**Mission:** copy of mission call letter and when the student will return to school.

## Consent for Use of Student Work

You are asked to review and sign the *Consent Form for Student Work* and *Consent Form for Obtaining Data from Future Employer(s)*. Your written consent meets two primary purposes: (1) to share samples of student work with our accreditation agencies, and (2) to use exemplary student work as models for other students. See Consent for Use of Student Work in the Appendix

# ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES AND TERMINATION OF GRADUATE STATUS

## Grievance Procedures

If a graduate student feels her/his work has been unfairly or inadequately evaluated, the first step is to contact the faculty member. Usually the issue is amicably resolved on an informal basis between the student and faculty member. If consulting with the faculty member or the graduate committee chair does not resolve a grievance, a graduate student should describe the problem to the department graduate coordinator and/or the department chair. If difficulties persist, the student may ask the college dean and finally the graduate dean for review. All grievances must be presented within a year of the semester in question. For more information, please review the [policy and procedures](https://gradstudies.byu.edu/page/policies-and-procedures) on the GS website.

## Termination of Graduate Status

Termination of graduate status may result from failure to meet certain requirements of admission, registration, program progress or performance, such as:

* Fail to satisfactorily complete the conditions of acceptance.
* Fail to fulfill the university’s minimum registration requirement.
* Fail to meet the degree time limit (5 years).
* Make a request to withdraw (with the intent to pursue a degree at another university, for personal reasons, or in response to department recommendation).
* Receive a Marginal or Unsatisfactory rating in a periodic review by the academic department and you are unable or unwilling to comply with conditions for continuance outlined by the department.
* Fail to make what the department or the university deems to be satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree.
* Fail the departmental comprehensive examination.
* Fail the final oral examination (defense of dissertation, thesis, or project).
* Violate the university’s standards of conduct or Honor Code.

## Appeal of Termination

If you are dismissed or are facing dismissal, you may respond to or appeal that termination or impending termination. Such responses or appeals should be directed, in writing, to the Department Chair. If you wish further consideration, you may appeal to the Dean of the School of Education. Ultimately, a final appeal may be made to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who, if circumstances warrant, may appoint a committee of impartial faculty members to review the matter.

## Discontinuance

Graduate students who wish to withdraw from the university must initiate that process at the Discontinuance Office, B-150 ASB, (801) 422-7705

# GRADUATE STUDENT EVALUATION

The department uses several methods to assess your performance and progress as you work toward completion of the program.

## Course Grades and Thesis Research

Professors evaluate you on your course work and thesis research. A GPA of 3.0 is required to continue in any graduate program. A professor may refer a student whose performance is considered substandard to the Special Education Graduate Committee for review.

## End-of-Semester Graduate Student Evaluation

The Office of Graduate Studies requires a student evaluation report twice per year. This evaluation requires you to be rated by special education graduate faculty using one of three ratings: **satisfactory, marginal, or unsatisfactory**.

If rated **unsatisfactory** or **marginal**, you are informed by the department in writing. Along with the reasons for the rating, you will be informed of what you need to do to make satisfactory progress, the time/date when each task needs to be accomplished, the faculty members you should contact for more information or support, and potential consequences if you are unable to accomplish these tasks within the criterion specified.

*If you receive an* ***unsatisfactory*** *rating or do not receive an evaluation*, you will not be eligible to obtain financial aid.

If you receive a **marginal** and an **unsatisfactory** or two unsatisfactory ratings in succession, the department will (a) terminate your program at the end of the semester, or (b) submit (with you) a petition to Graduate Studies making a convincing case that you be allowed another semester to demonstrate satisfactory progress. A copy of the contract listing your responsibilities and a time line will be attached.

If you receive a **marginal** rating in one semester and are not making satisfactory progress in the next semester, you will receive an “unsatisfactory progress” rating. In other words, you cannot be rated as making marginal progress in two sequential semesters. Failure to correct marginal progress is automatically considered “unsatisfactory”.

**Marginal** progress may include the following:

* failure to submit program of study form
* failure to establish a graduate committee
* registering for thesis hours when little or no work has been done
* failure to submit an approved thesis/dissertation prospectus
* minimal contact with chair or advisory committee members
* prospectus or thesis/dissertation draft not approved
* limited progress toward courses and requirements on Program of Study
* poor performance in clinical/externship/applied experience
* poor performance in research

**Unsatisfactory** progress may include the following:

* grade in a course falling below B-
* failure to complete program of study form
* failure to establish a graduate committee
* failing a course
* registering for thesis hours when little or no work has been done
* failure to submit an approved thesis/dissertation prospectus
* failure of comprehensive exams
* minimal or no contact with chair or advisory committee members
* prospectus or thesis/dissertation draft not approved
* lacking progress toward courses and requirements on study list
* poor performance in applied clinical experiences
* rated as marginal in previous review and has not remediated weak areas
* concerns about ethical or professional behavior
* poor performance in research
* failure to resolve any problems or fulfill any requirements indicated in a previous marginal or unsatisfactory review

According to the BYU Graduate Studies catalog, you may also be dismissed from the program if you:

* Fail to maintain minimum registration
* Receive a marginal or unsatisfactory rating in a periodic review by the academic department and are unable or unwilling to comply with conditions for continuance outlined by the department
* Fail to make what the department or the university deems to be satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree
* Fail the thesis defense and final oral examination
* Violate the university’s standards of conduct or the Honor Code

## Evaluation Domains

All students are evaluated on three domains (knowledge, performance, and dispositions) after the end of each Fall and Winter Semester. This evaluation is intended to identify and facilitate remediation of any deficiencies in a timely manner and to convey to you progress and standing in the program.

Included with the three domains of knowledge, performance, and dispositions is an assessment of your progress in meeting timelines and all program requirements.

*Knowledge Evaluations*. Evaluation of your progress in the knowledge domain is based upon grades in courses and the professors’ perceptions of your work. An additional component of your knowledge is also reflected in the effectiveness and efficiency of the progress of your research. A self-assessment of your developing knowledge on a progressive basis (at least at the end of each semester) is important for you in determining any needed changes in your study habits or commitment to learning.

*Performance Evaluations*. Evaluation of your performance is based primarily on the evidence of your skill development in the areas of competence expected for your courses, and the skills associated with your thesis research.

*Dispositions Evaluations*. Evaluation of your dispositions results from faculty interactions with you in a variety of settings, including your university classes and other formal and informal associations. The planned frequency of the mentoring process through your advisor and committee allows considerable opportunity for giving and receiving feedback regarding all aspects of your progress. You should seek opportunity for this input. Your progress is dependent, in part, upon the amount and frequency of specific feedback about your strengths and challenges as you move through this developmental process.

You are expected to develop and maintain a disposition or attitude that is consistent with educational training and personal and professional roles, by:

* Maintaining effective working relationships with faculty, staff, supervisors, colleagues, and students
* Understanding human diversity and remaining current with the standards of professional services
* Acquiring and portraying the personal traits necessary to be successful in all aspects of your work
* Meeting professional obligations and practice in an ethical, legal, moral, and professional manner
* Understanding and incorporating the Honor Code of the University
* Committing to the role of an ethical and responsible special educator
* Valuing and committing to a lifetime of learning and service by gaining more knowledge, developing new skills, and seeking to make personal improvements through openness and genuineness

See the Appendix for the *End-Of-Semester Graduate Student Evaluation Form*.

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT

## Graduate Studies

More information about funding can be found at GS [Costs & Financial Aid](https://gradstudies.byu.edu/page/costs-financial-aid-0) website. This includes scholarship applications as well as other funding opportunities available to graduate students.

## Counseling Psychology and Special Education (CPSE)

The Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education provides each admitted student a graduate research assistantship and a partial tuition scholarship during the two years of the program. Amounts vary from year to year depending on funding allocations from multiple sources.

*Scholarship money will not be awarded where no tuition is due*, such as in the case where a student may be receiving spouse tuition benefits from BYU.

BYU Special Education Graduate Faculty:

* Cade Charlton, PhD, BCBA, LBA, Disability Disciplines, Utah State University
* Elizabeth Cutrer, PhD, Early Childhood Special Education, University of North Carolina
* Blake Hansen, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, Behavioral Psychology, University of Kansas
* Ryan Kellems, PhD, Special Education, University of Kansas
* Jared Morris, PhD, Special Education, The Pennsylvania State University – University Park
* Christian Sabey, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA, Disability Disciplines, Utah State University

# M.S. IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## The Mission of the Special Education Program

We strive to prepare special educators and behavior analysts to support systemic changes in schools or clinics, which result in enhanced academic and social welfare of individuals with disabilities.

## Program Description

The BYU Special Education MS program prepares graduate students to provide collaborative leadership to facilitate academic and social learning for all students, including individuals with disabilities and/or those at-risk for learning or behavior problems. To prepare graduate level special educators and behavior analysts to work collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams, the masters program focuses on Applied Behavior Analysis and Multi-tiered System of Supports.

The program is based upon a scholar-practitioner model of training. This model is an integrated approach to training that acknowledges the interdependence of theory, research, and practice. As a result, we recruit full-time professionals working in schools, clinics, or agencies with individuals who have disabilities.

When you graduate from this program, your preparation and credentials will qualify you academically and personally for numerous employment options. Graduates in the past have obtained positions as master teachers, behavior analysts, special education district administrators, and university clinical professors. Some graduates have gone on to complete doctoral programs in educational areas.

Courses include a course sequence verified by the Association for Behavior Analysis International that is part of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board’s requirements for taking the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) exam. At this time we do not officially provide supervision. Please speak to Dr. Charlton to learn about the requirements for BCBA supervision.

This program combines coursework on the evidence-based practice of special education and behavior analysis. Coursework in behavior analysis includes a Verified Course Sequence (VCS) approved by the Association of Behavior Analysts International (ABAI) and consistent with the most recent requirements published by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). The program is taught by faculty across multiple programs within the Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education (CPSE) with collaborative experiences in courses offered alongside your peers in related programs (e.g., School Psychology, Teacher Education). We are fortunate that a BYU education offers a spiritual, ethical and moral dimension of education and are committed to assisting you as you learn and grow in the program. We are confident that you will enjoy this experience and find great reward in devotion to your studies.

## Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB)

The Behavior Analyst Certification Board is responsible for the certification and advancement of behavior analysts. The BACB is a nonprofit corporation that was established in 1998 to protect consumers of behavior-analytic services by systematically establishing, promoting, and disseminating professional standards of practice. The BCBA certification program is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the accreditation body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE). In the profession of applied behavior analysis, the BACB’s primary role is to operate certification programs, which involves responsibilities similar to regulatory boards. In this role, the BACB establishes practice standards, administers examinations, and provides ethics requirements and a disciplinary system for each of its certification programs.

The Special Education MS program includes a verified course sequence (VCS) to prepare individuals for certification as a behavior analyst. Therefore, the VCS courses and program are maintained to ensure alignment and compliance with guidelines published by the BACB. In addition, students can work to obtain supervised hours during the program. Guidelines for supervision are published by the BACB.  
[BACB Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Ethics-Code-for-Behavior-Analysts-210902.pdf)  
[BCBA Task List (5th Ed)](https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/BCBA-task-list-5th-ed-211019.pdf) This list includes the knowledge and skills that serve as the foundation for the BCBA examination.  
[BCBA Eligibility Requirements](https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/BCBA-2022EligibilityRequirements_210915-2.pdf#Supervised%20Fieldwork%20Requirements)

# DESCRIPTION OF FACILITIES

## Technology Education Computing Lab (TEC Lab)

The Technology Education Computing Lab is a comprehensive educational computer lab, located in Room 180 of the McKay Building. The lab provides educational technology support to the McKay School of Education. The goal of the TEC Lab is to improve the quality of teaching and learning by helping faculty and students integrate technology into their experiences at BYU and in the public schools.

This large computer lab is available for your use in writing papers, reports, and completing other assignments. This lab contains computers, scanners, printers, and other electronic equipment. Lab assistants are available to help you. Please review information about the services, technology, and software available in the [Technology, Education, Computing Lab.](http://education.byu.edu/teclab/)

## University Writing Center

The Writing Center provides students from all disciplines with one-on-one help with their writing at any stage in the writing process. Peer tutors from many disciplines are committed to helping students become better writers by focusing on the global aspects of writing, such as thesis construction, organization, transitions, idea development, logical coherence, style, and argument clarity. Please review information about the services available at [BYU Writing Center.](http://writingcenter.byu.edu/)

## Statistics Lab

The statistics department has various open labs scheduled where you can receive help with statistical procedures. The times and room numbers vary each semester. You can email [statsec@hannibal.byu.edu](mailto:statsec@hannibal.byu.edu) to receive the current schedule.

All Graduate Students are entitled to two FREE hours of consultation at the [Consulting Center](http://statistics.byu.edu/content/consulting-center) within BYU's [Statistics Department.](http://statistics.byu.edu/) An additional FREE hour of consultation is offered to graduate students if the Center is involved in the planning state of their research. Cost reductions are given to graduate students when their advisor is present at the initial consultation. Charges are usually waived for collaborative research that leads to joint authorship.

## Office of Technology

The BYU Office of Technology provides certain software programs that students may access for free while they have Student status.  To view these offerings, log into your myBYU page and go to software.byu.edu, then select the Student option. For more information, contact Education Computing Support [ECS@byu.edu](mailto:ECS@byu.edu) or 801-422-7796.

## Graduate Student Mailboxes

Your name will be put on a file in the filing cabinet in the CPSE Department office as a place for professors to give you written information. You may also receive mail or other information in your file. Please check it regularly.

# ORIENTATION AND THE ADVISORY SYSTEM

## Orientation

During your first term, you will receive an overview of the program, the faculty, the university, and graduate study in special education. This orientation is an important part of your program and will help you begin to develop your research topic and identify faculty members to work with you on your thesis committee.

For general questions about university procedures and graduation, consult the Office of Graduate Studies. You should review the information for Current Students at the BYU [Graduate Studies](http://graduatestudies.byu.edu/) [Website](http://graduatestudies.byu.edu/).

## Selection of a Thesis Chair/Advisory Committee

Chair selection is mainly on the basis of your stated interest in studying a topic in a faculty member's area of research expertise. Upon your admissions, you were assigned a special education faculty member, who has been approved by the Dean and Graduate Studies as an advisor, to advise you and serve as your thesis chair. This professor serves as the link between you and the program. They convey department and program information and feedback about your evaluations, progress, and (if necessary) remediation of deficiencies in your course of study.

During the first fall semester of study, students confirm their official thesis chair and advisory committee. In the Graduate Progress system, the student selects a committee chair and members and sends a request through the system for them to agree to serve on the committee.

The Thesis Committee’s major role is to guide you through the program and to aid in the selection of courses, and to assist you in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of your thesis. You are encouraged to visit faculty members, discuss their research interests, and determine the availability of faculty to serve on your committee. You must select at least two other graduate faculty to serve on your Advisory Committee. Choose these members based upon their expertise in your area of research and their willingness to serve on your committee. You may choose committee members from Special Education and/or other areas (e.g., School Psychology, Educational Leadership, Teacher Education, Communication Disorders), but who have expertise in your area of study.

In summary, your advisor and advisory committee may assist you in various aspects of the program as you:

* Become oriented to the program
* Register for appropriate courses
* Assure that all program admission deficiencies or conditional admission requirements are met
* Complete or modify the “Program of Study”
* Obtain financial assistance or a graduate assistantship
* Prepare for the oral defense of your thesis research and coursework
* Prepare for graduation
* Request references or other verification of your work as you search for employment opportunities

*Change of advisors* after students have become familiar with the faculty’s research interests may be possible upon request and with approval of the faculty involved and, the Graduate Coordinator. If circumstances such as major changes in thesis topic, preference, or faculty availability arise, you may select a different chair.

# CURRICULUM AND SCHEDULING

## Cohort Learning

Students are admitted every year as a cohort of students who work together through the same core academic program. Since most courses build on the knowledge and skills developed in previous courses, you must to take the schedule of courses with your cohort. Courses are taught in the evenings to accommodate teachers’ schedules during Fall, Winter, and Spring.

## Degree Requirements

A Master’s of Science degree in the Special Education program requires successful completion of 36 semester hours of graduate coursework, including 6 hours of thesis work. The 36 semester hours are to be completed in accordance with the program curriculum. Courses align with the focus of the program.

## Registering for Classes

The M.S. program is a part-time, evening school program. The minimal University enrollment requirements are: 1) register for at least two semester hours each semester or term in which you are using university resources (including consulting with your faculty advisor), and 2) register for a minimum of six semester hours during each academic year. The [Graduate Catalog](https://graduatestudies.byu.edu/content/graduate-studies-catalog) is found online at the school of graduate studies website.

## Coursework

The program will require 24 hours of required courses; 6 hours of elective courses\* and 6 hours of thesis credit to total 36 hours.

Fall 1st Year

CPSE 615 Applied Behavioral Assessment & intervention (3)

CPSE 673 Single-Case Research Design (3)

Winter 1st Year

CPSE 601 Concepts & Principles of Behavior I (3)

Spring 1st Year

CPSE 615 Academic and Behavioral Problem Solving (4)

Fall 2nd Year

CPSE 603 Concepts & Principles of Behavior II: Verbal Behavior (3)

CPSE 618 Ethics and Professional Conduct in Behavior Analysis (3)

Winter 2nd Year

PCSE 620 Evidence-Based Academic Intervention for RTI (3)

Spring 2nd Year

CPSE 628 Supervision and Professional Issues in Applied Behavior Analysis (2)

Students will work with their Faculty Advisory Chair to determine the optimal semesters/terms to register for the six (6) thesis hours required for the program.

\*Recommended Courses for Elective Credit

CPSE 611 Special Education Law (Winter; 1.5, term-length)

CPSE 613 Autism Spectrum Disorders (Spring; 1-3 variable)

CPSE 690 Seminar in Special Education - Transition (Winter; 3)

CPSE 697R Special Problems & Projects (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer; 4)

## Learning Outcomes

The Special Education M.S. program has four primary learning outcomes. At the conclusion of your studies, you will have master-level skills and knowledge in the following areas:

* Historical, philosophical, & conceptual issues in services for people with disabilities. Analyze historical, philosophical, and conceptual issues in behavior analytic service delivery for people with disabilities in school, home, and clinical settings. (CPSE 601, 603).
* Effective writing and oral communication. Design, conduct, write, and defend a comprehensive manuscript based upon original research. Students prepare and orally defend a written thesis based upon research in current issues in education. Students learn effective communication skills to interact with clients, parents, administrators, and others they interact with in a professional capacity. (Thesis, All Courses)
* Professional issues in behavior analytic service delivery for people with disabilities. Develop competencies around the use of evidence-based practice to assess strengths and identify challenges to create programs to improve academic skill building, develop social and emotional skills, and reduce problem behaviors. (CPSE 614, 615, & 620)
* Research Issues in special education, behavior analysis, and related disciplines. Analyze current research design and methodology issues in educational research and service delivery for people with disabilities in school, home, and clinical settings. (CPSE 673)

These outcomes will be achieved through successful completion of the program, including the required courses and thesis research. See [Special Education M.S. Expected Learning Outcomes](https://learningoutcomes.byu.edu/#college%3DpS5G0s4R9yjQ%26department%3DEiZioU4y76Dz%26program%3DEhv4AuEcifSu).

## Alignment with BYU University Aims

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Brigham Young University Aims:**  (All items are from [http://aims.byu.edu/p/aims)](%20http://aims.byu.edu/p/aims)) | **Special Education Graduate**  **Aims:** | **SPED MS Learning Outcomes:** |
| *Spiritually Strengthening:*   * Teach every subject with the Spirit, * “…every…teacher…would keep his subject matter bathed in the light and color of the restored gospel”, * To build testimonies of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, and * Warms and enlightens students by the bright fire of their teachers’ faith while enlarging their minds with knowledge. | We are committed to creating a community of belonging among graduate students where critical issues of faith, service, and discipleship are readily discussed in our quest to better the lives of individuals with disabilities, their families, and their communities. Our commitment to this community will be founded on the expectation that all are expected to create similar communities among the colleagues and clients with whom they work off campus. | Historical, philosophical, & conceptual issues in services for people with disabilities. Analyze historical, philosophical, and conceptual issues in behavior analytic service delivery for people with disabilities in school, home, and clinical settings. (CPSE 601, 603) |
| *Intellectually Enlarging:*   * Ambitious commitment to pursue truth, * Develop skills in the basic tools of learning, * Develop a breadth understanding of the broad areas of human knowledge, and * Provide in-depth study to develop real competence in at least one area of concentration. * Faculty actively produce scholarly and creative works. | We are committed to leading evidence-based practice and the creation of new knowledge to inform critical problems of practice. We are expected to spearhead original research, critically examine common practices of special education, and engage in dissemination of our findings to the scientific community as well as the individuals with disabilities, their families, and their local communities. | Effective writing and oral communication. Design, conduct, write, and defend a comprehensive manuscript based upon original research. Students prepare and orally defend a written thesis based upon research in current issues in education. Students learn effective communication skills to interact with clients, parents, administrators, and others they interact with in a professional capacity. (Thesis, All Courses)    Professional issues in behavior analytic service delivery for people with disabilities. Develop competencies around the use of evidence-based practice to assess strengths and identify challenges to create programs to improve academic skill building, develop social and emotional skills, and reduce problem behaviors. (CPSE 614, 615, & 620) |
| *Character Building:*   * Bring together the intellectual integrity of fine academic discipline with the spiritual integrity of personal righteousness. * Encourage strong moral character and great mental capability, * Every…experience should therefore strengthen character and teach “those moral virtues which characterize the life and teachings of the Son of God”. | We seek to create opportunities for inspiring learning where students can act with faith to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities in schools. These fundamentally experiential learning opportunities will allow all within the program to ethically critique existing services and promote an effective multi-tiered system of supports to enhance the social, emotional, and academic development of the students and families we serve. Further, as program students collaborate with faculty, site-supervisors, and school administrators, they will demonstrate ethical performance and professionalism in all interactions. With integrity, program students will also support and sustain ethical practices while learning to implement interventions with individuals with disabilities,  Following the example of mentors and faculty in the program,  students will maintain compliance with the University Honor Code. | Research Issues in special education, behavior analysis, and related disciplines. Analyze current research design and methodology issues in educational research and service delivery for people with disabilities in school, home, and clinical settings. (CPSE 673)    Ethical and legal issues in services for people with disabilities. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical principles and legal procedures for providing services to individuals with disabilities in school, home, and clinical settings. (CPSE 618) |
| *Lifelong Learning and Service:*   * Inspire students to keep alive their curiosity and prepare them to continue learning throughout their lives, * Point the way to a habit of constant learning, * Nurture in its student the desire to use their knowledge and skills to bless their families, communities, the Church, and the larger society, and a service ethic should permeate every part of BYU’s activities. | We are committed to producing graduate students who pursue lifelong reflection and renewal as special educators through:   * Continually seeking opportunities for professional development * Critically consuming and producing rigorous research. * Actively serving by advocating for individuals with disabilities and supporting their families. * Training, mentoring, and coaching pre-service and career educators. * Contributing to policy development & driving systems change as members and leaders in school, district, and state education teams. |  |

## Program of Study

The program of study is an agreement that will help you fulfill all course requirements. In the Graduate Progress system, the student will add elective classes to the list of required coursework and invite the committee to review and approve it. The Program Manager verifies that all requirements have been reflected in the coursework and approves for the Department.

*Changes in your program or committee* must be authorized by your committee and the graduate coordinator. Students wishing to make changes to either the Committee or Coursework should contact the Program Manager for assistance.

## Graduate Student Progress Reports

The Graduate Student Progress Reports are available for your review at any time through the Graduate Progress system. These reports list courses completed, courses remaining from your study list, and important updates and reminders from the Office of Graduate Studies.

# THE THESIS

## Thesis Overview

A thesis is a written document that describes a completed research project which represents an original or extended contribution to the knowledge of the field. It is a result of your close collaboration with your advisory committee and includes two primary sections:

* Journal Ready Article
  + Introduction
  + Methods
  + Results
  + Discussion
* Review of Literature

The main purposes of completing a thesis are to help you:

* Add new information and skills to your academic repertoire
* Become familiar with the research literature in special education and your particular area of interest
* Provide a vehicle for you to demonstrate application, analysis, and synthesis of research and professional literature in special education
* Add to the knowledge base in the field of special education

Generally, your thesis will have five chapters and be more thorough than most journal articles; however, it should be suitable for adapting for publication as a journal article. This will allow your research to be shared and contribute to the educational literature. You are encouraged to co-author articles with the Advisory Chair and committee as a culminating part of your study.

Upon completion, you must submit an electronic copy of your thesis (in PDF format) to the university library. An electronic thesis or dissertation (ETD) document is similar to its paper predecessor, but differs in that ETDs provide a technologically advanced medium for expression.. With your approval, they can be available to anyone via the internet. Assistance on electronic submission may be obtained from the Graduate Progress page’s Resources tab.

## APA Formatting Help

The Special Education program uses the 7th edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) writing guidelines as the authoritative source on all aspects of scholarly writing—from the ethics of duplicate publications to the word choice that best reduces bias in language. You can get APA help at the [Thesis and Dissertation Aids](https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html) website maintained by the McKay School of Education. Additionally, help with your thesis research and literature review can be found at [Detailed Research Guide: Background Resources](http://guides.lib.byu.edu/generalsearch?sid=325599) website through the BYU Library.

## Planning Your Schedule

In all stages of thesis research and writing, you should maintain regular contact with your thesis chair for guidance in such matters as selection of your research topic, research design, organization, direction, coherence, and writing style. Such contact will save the time and expense of redoing work. Your written work will be reviewed several times. You should plan your research schedule to allow for resubmission of written work. Your thesis will represent you as a professional, so it is expected to be of high quality. It must demonstrate thoughtful, logical organization, and mature written expression. The quality of the written work is the responsibility of the student, not your faculty advisor or committee members.

Your thesis is expected to be free of typographical, spelling, and grammatical errors. The most recent Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) is the required style manual for the department. Further please review BYU Graduate Studies Minimum [Standards for Submitting Dissertations and Theses.](http://www.chem.byu.edu/static/media/uploads/files/minimum_standards.pdf) Graduate Studies guidelines supersede APA guidelines.

A free resource, APA for Novices, written by the McKay School of Education scholarly editor Sharon Black, is available on the [MSE Thesis & Dissertation Aids](http://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html) webpage.

## Selecting a Thesis Topic

In conjunction with selecting an Advisory Committee Chairperson, you will select a research topic. This topic should be one which is interesting and motivating to you; however, it should also align with your chairperson’s research interests and expertise. By doing so, your chair is able to guide and direct the literature review and the execution of your research study. Your Advisory Committee members should also have the skills and interests necessary to guide you in your work. Human Rights and the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

## Thesis Prospectus Procedures

Prior to the prospectus defense, you work substantially with your thesis advisory chair, and under the direction of the chair, provide draft copies of the prospectus to committee members for feedback. The thesis prospectus meeting is a time to meet with your thesis committee to discuss, revise, and approve the proposed research.

*Prior to the meeting:* **Three weeks prior** to this meeting, provide the committee chair with either a paper or digital a copy of the prospectus. The chair will review it, provide feedback (changes may be necessary), and will recommend you begin the process of the prospectus defense by providing draft copies of the prospectus to committee members for feedback. After making changes and **at least two weeks prior** to the prospectus meeting, you will provide each committee member with either a paper or digital copy of the prospectus (check with each member to determine preferences). If the committee decides that your prospectus is not ready to be presented, you will be required to make changes prior to scheduling the meeting. Once the committee agrees that the prospectus is free of major theoretical, methodological, and writing errors (including formatting, spelling, and grammar), your chair will tell you to schedule the meeting for the defense.

The prospectus meeting must be scheduled with the advisory committee **at least two weeks in advance**. Inform the Program Manager of the planned meeting and work with the student secretary

to schedule a meeting room.

**What to bring to the meeting:**

* A computer (if you are projecting your presentation to a screen)
* Mac adaptor for the computer/projector, if necessary
* Hard copies of your PowerPoint slides if you are presenting using this software (optional)
* Your personal calendar/planner so you can agree upon due dates with your committee

**Typical structure of prospectus meeting:**

1. Committee chair introduces committee members and MS candidate, if necessary.
2. Committee chair invites a committee member to give the invocation.
3. Committee chair states the purpose of the meeting and how the meeting will proceed.
4. Committee chair may volunteer to take notes for you, so you can concentrate on the discussions rather than on taking notes.
5. MS candidate presents an oral summary of the literature review, research questions, proposed methods, and proposed data analysis. (It is helpful if the committee members have a written summary to follow, e.g., PowerPoint show, written outline. It is also helpful for you to bring a written copy of the prospectus for a reference during the discussions).
6. Committee members will ask questions of you for clarification of concepts written in the Introduction, Review of Literature, and Methods sections. The members then discuss relevant issues with you to gain consensus on the changes that need to occur before proceeding with Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.
7. Committee chair will ask you to step out of the room while the committee decides whether you are ready to proceed with the study.
8. Committee agrees upon dates for completing thesis work that are congruent with departmental and university deadlines (use the dates from the departmental form, not the university form: “Graduation Deadlines for Graduate Students”).
9. Committee chair invites you back in to the room and informs him/her of the committee’s decision:
   * Reconvene at a later date so the proposed study can be reviewed after substantial revisions have been made.
   * Proceed after making changes recommended by the committee
   * Proceed to work with your Advisor to get IRB approval from BYU and schools/districts where you will conduct research.
10. Candidate collects copies of the thesis (paper or electronic copies) from committee members and schedules an appointment with committee chair to discuss committee members’ recommendations.

**Following the meeting:** The MS candidate then makes all changes determined appropriate by the advisory chair. You send the revised prospectus to the chair (and, if necessary, the committee), for approval. Final committee approval will take place electronically.

## IRB Human Subjects Approval

Following your prospectus approval, your Advisory Chair will be responsible to have IRB approval in place for your thesis. This will most likely consist of the submission of an addendum adding you as a research assistant to an already existing IRB-approval or submitting a new IRB application for your study with the Advisor as the PI and you as the research assistant. You may work with your Advisor to prepare the new application if it is necessary. You will need to complete the online IRB tutorial to be cleared to work on the research project of your thesis.

**Timelines:** This process can take 2-3 months! Please take great care to meet all of the deadlines. The following represent typical timelines. Check with your thesis chair for specific timelines for your research.

1-2 weeks: Time for the chair to review the prospectus.

1-2 weeks: Time to make changes as recommended by the chair.

2 weeks: Time for the committee to review the prospectus prior to the meeting.

1-2 weeks: Time for you to make changes after the prospectus meeting.

weeks: Time for the chair to approve the changes to the prospectus.

Up to 6 weeks: Time for the Institutional Review Board to review the proposal. Proposals are triaged by the IRB (not the researcher) according to their apparent degree of risk to human subjects.

There are three general categories of proposals:

* EXEMPT proposals represent the lowest risk and are typically approved in 2 days.
* EXPEDITED proposals represent the next level of risk and are typically processed in 2 weeks.
* FULL-BOARD proposals represent the highest level of risk and require review by the full board (12 members) of the IRB. Full- board proposal must be submitted before the 20th of the month (deadline).

*The IRB meets on the first Thursday of the following month.* Full board proposals can take up to 6 weeks to be reviewed and processed. Because Special Education and School Psychology research often involve vulnerable populations such as children or people with cognitive impairments, they are often seen as highest risk, full-board proposals.

1-2 weeks: Time to make changes as recommended by the IRB committee.

1-2 weeks: Time for the IRB committee to review and approve the changes.

1 week: Time for the graduate coordinator to review and approve the research.

## Thesis Defense and Final Examination

The thesis defense is a public meeting, scheduled through the Graduate School, in which you present and defend your thesis by answering questions about it. The university community is invited to attend the thesis defense meeting. Others (e.g., your family and friends) can be invited upon approval of the committee chair. Only the Advisory Committee and you are permitted to engage in dialogue during the meeting, and guests are dismissed following your presentation of the research.

## Scheduling the Thesis Defense

**Ready for Defense:** After students have completed their research or project, they upload their written work into the progress milestone called “Ready for Defense” in the Graduate Progress system. This is where they will share their written work with their committee to read and make comments for edits needed. All edits or revised versions should be uploaded in the ‘Ready for Defense’ progress milestone.

**Defense:** Once all committee members have approved, students will work with their committee to find a time agreeable to all for the defense meeting. Then students will work with the graduate program manager to officially schedule the date and time for their defense.

## Thesis Defense Meeting General Outline

1. Committee chair invites you into the meeting and introduces committee members and MS candidate, if necessary.
2. Committee chair invites a committee member to give the invocation.
3. Committee chair dismisses you and visitors/observers, then discusses with the committee if you are ready to defend the thesis (this step may happen prior to the commencement of the meeting).
4. Committee chair clarifies the purpose of the meeting and how the meeting will proceed.
5. Committee chair may volunteer to take notes for you, so you can concentrate on the discussions rather than on taking notes.
6. MS candidate presents a brief oral summary of the literature review and research questions. The presentation of the following components of the thesis is more substantial: methods, data analysis, results, and discussion. It is helpful if the committee members have a written summary to follow (e.g., PowerPoint show, written outline). This whole presentation generally takes no more than 15-20 minutes. It may take longer if committee members ask questions of you during the presentation.
7. If questions are reserved until following the presentation, committee members then ask questions for clarification of concepts and to gain consensus on the information presented in the thesis.
8. Observers of the thesis defense may be dismissed at this point.
9. Committee members commence the Comprehensive Oral Examination of the MS candidate.
10. Committee chair asks you to step out of the room while the committee decides whether you have passed the thesis defense and oral examination.
11. The committee chair invites you back to the room and informs him/her of the committee’s decision. Possible thesis defense outcomes are determined by vote of the committee:
    * Pass: no changes are necessary; the thesis is accepted, signed, and copies made for the Library.
    * Pass with qualifications: The thesis needs minor changes. The committee chair holds up the results of the defense until the changes have been satisfactorily completed.
    * Recess: The thesis needs revision, further writing, or other fixing. Another defense is necessary but must be held at least one month later.
    * Fail: The student's degree program is terminated immediately.
12. The thesis committee and candidate discuss and sign the Co-authorship Agreement Form as appropriate.
13. Candidate collects copies of the thesis from committee members and schedules an appointment with committee chair to discuss committee members’ recommendations.

## Oral Comprehensive Examination Procedures

The M.S. in Special Education program does not require a written comprehensive examination. However, during your thesis defense meeting you will be required to orally demonstrate knowledge and skills gained throughout your graduate studies. Each course should prepare you for successful completion of this examination.

The purpose of this oral examination is to provide you, as a master special educator, with the opportunity to verbally demonstrate your knowledge of the relationship between your coursework and your thesis research.

The following procedures have been established by the special education faculty as guidelines for the Oral Comprehensive Examination.

**Examination Guidelines:**

* The examination will take place during the student’s thesis defense meeting.
* All thesis advisory committee members will evaluate the student’s responses to the questions, unless the thesis chair exempts a member (e.g., committee member from outside of the department). See Oral Comprehensive Exam Evaluation form in Appendix.
* A “Pass” on all 3 questions results in successful completion of the comprehensive examination. (“Pass” requires a minimum of 2 in each category for each question; see attached rubric).
* A “Pass” on the retaken question(s) results in successful completion of the comprehensive examination. (“Pass” requires a minimum of 2 in each category for each question; see attached rubric).
* Exception to retaking comprehensive examination questions: Any student who receives a zero (0) on any question does not pass the comprehensive examination and may not complete retaking the exam during the current exam period.

**Scheduling a Retake or Second Administration of the Comprehensive Examination:**

* If a student’s first attempt at the comprehensive examination is not successful, the student is allowed to “retake” the examination during another semester. A new set of questions will be provided. A retake does not have to occur during the following semester.
* It is suggested that any student who is asked to retake the comprehensive examination receive guidance from his/her thesis advisor for studying and preparing for the next exam.
* If results from a second administration of the comprehensive examination prove to be unsatisfactory, the student will be dismissed from the program.

## Thesis Approval and Submission Process

Review the Graduate Studies Forms ADV 11a [Sample Title Page](https://gradstudies.byu.edu/file/adv-form-11a), and 11b [Preliminary Pages Template - Thesis](https://gradstudies.byu.edu/file/adv-form-11b), 11c [Sample Preliminary Pages](https://gradstudies.byu.edu/file/adv-form-11c) for details regarding formatting and submission standards.

Using the information available on the School of Education’s “Thesis & Dissertation Aids” webpage, <https://education.byu.edu/research/dissertation_aids.html> students will prepare a Word copy of their thesis to be submitted, along with a copy of the completed formatting checklist, to the Program’s Graduate Coordinator, who will forward it to the Dean’s Office.

After the revisions required by the Dean’s Office have been completed, then the student converts the Word document to PDF format (according to MSE guidelines) and submits the PDF copy to the Dean’s Office for review. After the student makes any revisions required by the Dean’s Office, they will upload the final PDF version on Graduate Progress (select the ETD button).  Following a 1st approval by Graduate Studies, they will route the PDF to the Graduate Coordinator and Dean’s Office again for final approval.

*“T” grades for CPSE 699R* are entered on the student’s transcript until the thesis is successfully defended. After completing the thesis, the “T” grades will be changed to “P” grades.

## Policy on Authorship

This document is meant to provide clarification on the M.S. in Special Education policy on authorship. Authorship is a way of giving credit and accepting responsibility for research and writing done in academic and professional work. It should be noted that most of the research and writing conducted in the M.S. in Special Education program is of a collaborative, team nature. It is rare that one individual designs, conducts, analyses and writes up an entire piece of research, thus the question of authorship becomes relevant.

Various disciplines handle the issue of authorship differently. In the cases of education and psychology, first authorship usually signifies the greatest level of responsibility and credit for the published work.

**The M.S. in Special Education policy on authorship adheres to the following guidelines from the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020, p. 24).**

* [Professionals] take credit, including authorship credit, only for work to which they have substantially contributed.
* Authorship reflects the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved, regardless of their relative status. Authorship includes those who do the writing and others who make a substantial scientific contribution to a study including formulating the problem or hypothesis, structuring the experimental design, organizing and conducting the statistical analysis, or interpreting the results. Minor contributions to the research or to the writing for publications are acknowledged appropriately, such as in footnotes or in an introductory statement.
* Except under exceptional circumstances, a student is listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student’s thesis. Faculty advisors discuss publication credit with students as early as feasible and throughout the research and publication process as appropriate.

Collaborators may need to reassess authorship credit and order if major changes are necessary in the course of the project (and its publication). This is especially true in faculty-student collaborations, when students may need intensive supervision or additional analyses may need to be conducted beyond the scope of a student's thesis.

The corresponding author (the author who serves as the main contact) should always obtain a person’s consent before including that person's name in a byline or in a note. Each author listed in the byline of an article should review the entire manuscript before it is submitted.

Authors are responsible for determining authorship and for specifying the order in which two or more author's names appear in the byline. The general rule is that the name of the principal contributor should appear first, with subsequent names in order of decreasing contribution. If authors played equal roles in the research and publication of their study, they may wish to note this in the second paragraph of the author note.

Authors are also responsible for the factual accuracy of their contributions. The opinions and statements published are the responsibility of the authors, and such opinions and statements do not necessarily represent the policies of APA or the views of the editors.

# GRADUATION PROCESSES

Apply for graduation by the published deadlines established by the Office of Graduate Studies or prior to scheduling your final thesis defense meeting. You can apply by logging into your Graduate Progress page and selecting, under Tools, the Apply for Graduation link.

Register for at least two semester hours of credit during your final semester (audit and home study do not apply). Spring and Summer terms count as one semester.

The Office of Graduate Studies will send you an e-mail reminding you to review your Official Graduation Clearance Check online through AIM.

## Graduation Deadlines

A department deadlines table will be sent to students periodically by the Program Manager. This table includes deadline for applying for graduation and completing the thesis (from thesis defense through ETD submission). These deadlines include additional CPSE Department deadlines in order to prepare students to meet Graduate Studies and McKay School of Education deadlines in a timely manner If you fail to meet the published graduation deadlines, you will need to reapply for graduation.

## The Exit Interview

You must have an exit interview with the Graduate Coordinator prior to graduation. This interview is scheduled in advance of the graduation deadline (but after completion of the thesis defense) to allow a review of your file. The Graduate Coordinator also asks about the quality and appropriateness of your graduate experience and gathers suggestions from the student. This provides important information for program improvement. Please assure that your exit interview meeting is scheduled.

Graduation Ceremonies

You are encouraged to participate in commencement and convocation services for your graduation. This is an exciting time to celebrate with your family, friends, fellow students, and faculty members.

All graduation requirements must be met by the established deadlines in order to graduate at the official graduation times. Graduations occur in April, June, August and December; however, the University graduation ceremony (Commencement) is only held in April. You may apply to participate in the April Commencement if you anticipate completing all requirements by the respective graduation dates within that academic year.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## Dissemination of Research

The department encourages you to participate in the professional community by disseminating written information to broad audiences and by presenting at professional conferences. You may also have opportunities to present your thesis research at a school-sponsored forum for student research. You are strongly encouraged to seek these and other opportunities to share your work.

The student travel policy will support graduate students presenting as first-authors. The amount will be $325. *Funding is only available once per calendar year.* You should contact the Department Secretary as soon as your presentation is accepted for further information on submitting a travel request.

Also, you may apply for presentation awards through the Graduate Student Association (GSA). See your GSA representative or visit the [GSA website](http://byugss.byu.edu/) for more information. Graduate students presenting original research at conferences are eligible to compete for a Professional Presentation Award (PPA) averaging $500. PPAs are intended to enable graduate students to travel to important conferences within their discipline in order to present their scholarly and creative work. PPAs are awarded two times each year and are distributed within two months after the application deadline. The application deadline is in the middle of an award period which allows students to apply who have either already presented their research or who are planning to within the specified time period. Approximately 1/3 of the applicants receive an award.

## The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

The Council for Exceptional Children program standards are used by the special education faculty to develop advanced teacher preparation through course curriculum and programs. These standards tie with the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium and combine with the moral dimensions of teaching to build a strong performance-based program.

CEC is an invaluable resource for teachers, researchers, and for state policymakers. Standards include the [CEC Code of Ethical Principles and Practice Standards](https://exceptionalchildren.org/standards/ethical-principles-and-practice-standards)  including standards for beginning special education teachers, administrators, educational diagnosticians, transition specialists, and paraeducators.

All students are encouraged to learn more about CEC and become affiliated as student or professional members of this organization. You may become a member of both national CEC as well as the BYU Student Council for Exceptional Children if you are not employed full time as a special educator. Full- time teachers may become professional members. Early involvement with this organization allows you to become familiar with the professional services and support that will become especially valuable to you after you complete your graduate studies. This early involvement also facilitates the development of a richer professional orientation by exposing you to the critical issues relevant to a broadly trained professional. For more information, see [Council for Exceptional Children](http://www.cec.sped.org/) .

## Graduate Student Association

The Brigham Young University Graduate Student Association (BYU-GSA) provides a campus-wide voice representing graduate students in order to facilitate change. In addition to graduate student advocacy, BYU-GSA works to enhance the unique culture at BYU by developing the academic, spiritual, and social facets of graduate education. BYU-GSA offers research presentation awards, free dinners and events, social outings, free religion courses, statistical help, inexpensive bus passes, and intramural sporting events. One graduate student from the SPED M.S. program will be invited to serve on the Graduate Student Council as the representative for your program. For more information, see [GSA website.](http://byugss.byu.edu/)

## Grad-to-Grad Mentoring

Communication from the Graduate Student Council as well as feedback from a survey conducted through Graduate Studies suggest the need for a student mentor program in which experienced graduate students mentor new graduate students. The Graduate Student Association (GSA), in conjunction with Graduate Studies, has established guidelines for a Grad-to-Grad Mentor Program that may be adjusted to fit the individual needs of each department on campus. Grad-to-grad mentoring benefits both students and departments by positioning new students to succeed in their graduate programs, by providing the means to promote student success, and by helping students avoid problems that require departmental action, thus saving time and work for graduate coordinators and secretaries.

# APPENDIX

## Program Forms and Guidelines

Counseling Psychology and Special Education

### End-Of-Semester Graduate Student Evaluation Form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| STUDENT: | FACULTY ADVISOR: |

Please rate each area (including OVERALL) as either Satisfactory, Marginal, or Unsatisfactory

KNOWLEDGE Criteria:

Acceptable grades in course work

Knowledge development on a progressive basis

|  |
| --- |
| Rating: |

Comments:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

PERFORMANCE Criteria:

Application of knowledge in applied/practical settings

Skill development in areas of competence

|  |
| --- |
| Rating: |

Comments:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

DISPOSITIONS Criteria:

Ethical performance and professionalism

Interactions with faculty, site-supervisors, school administrators

Compliance with BYU Honor Code

Regular contact with advisory chair

|  |
| --- |
| Rating: |

Comments:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

PROGRAM PROGRESS Criteria:

Submission of study list and committee in timely manner

Approval of prospectus

Progress or completion of thesis/dissertation

Courses completed in line with semester-by-semester outline in handbook

|  |
| --- |
| Rating: |

Comments:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

OVERALL

Evaluation reported to Graduate Studies

|  |
| --- |
| Rating: |

Comments:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

### MS in Special Education Oral Comprehensive Exam Evaluation Form

Student’s Name Evaluator: Date

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Conceptual Level | Accuracy and Thoroughness | Oral Expression |
| 4. Evaluation Level – The student presents an evaluative judgment of the issue including evidence based on the processes of comparison, discrimination, interpretation, summarization, and conclusion. | 4. The discussion is accurate, comprehensive and thoroughly supported. | 4. The response is very organized, succinct and clear. |
| 3. Analysis or Synthesis Level – The student breaks the concepts into parts and discusses interrelationships then brings the parts together into a different, original, or new whole. | 3. The discussion is accurate and most of the important relevant issues are addressed and well supported. | 3. The response is organized, succinct and clear. |
| 2. Comprehension or Application Level  – The student grasps the meaning of the material and interprets it through paraphrasing and/or providing examples. Also demonstrates the ability to apply rules, methods and theories in new situations. | 2. Most relevant issues are addressed. The information provided is generally accurate and documented. | 2. The response is somewhat organized, succinct, and clear. |
| 1. Knowledge Level – The student recalls knowledge of facts and theories. | 1. A few relevant issues are addressed. A number of inaccuracies exist. | 1. Poor organization. Not succinct or clear. |

(A “Pass” requires a minimum of 2 in each category)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Concept | Accuracy/ Thorough | Oral Express | Comments |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Evaluator’s signature:

### Overview of the Cognitive Domain of Bloom’s Taxonomy

The oral comprehensive exam evaluation form was designed with Bloom’s Taxonomy in mind. It is the basis for the evaluation of content, accuracy, and oral expression.

**Knowledge**

The recognition or recall of: common terms, specific facts, methods and procedures, basic concepts, and/or basic principles. For evaluation purposes, answers at the knowledge level involve little more than bringing to mind material appropriate to the question. Responses at the knowledge level may or may not reveal personal understanding of the subject matter.

Representative Responses: Definitions, descriptions, identifications, labels, lists, matches, names, outlines, reproductions, selections, statements.

**Comprehension**

Lowest level of understanding, comprehension level responses demonstrate basic understanding of terms, facts, concepts, methods and/or principles. Comprehension is exhibited through personal interpretation, paraphrasing, translation or extrapolation of relevant information. While comprehension level responses may demonstrate the writer’s ability to make use of existing material(s) or idea(s) as necessary to answer the question, the responses do not necessarily cite or link relationships to other material)s) or idea(s) or examine the material(s) or idea(s) as to their greater implications.

Representative Responses: Conversions, defenses, distinctions, estimations, explanations, extensions, providing examples, personal inferences, paraphrasing, predictions, rewrites, summarizations.

**Application**

The capability and capacity to apply concepts, methods, principles, laws, and/or theories to new and/or practical situations. Application-level understanding may be revealed through demonstrations of general concepts, methods, concepts, or may center upon abstract

manipulations of technical principles, ideas, and/or theories.

Representative Responses: Changes, computations, demonstrations, discoveries, manipulations, modifications, operates, preparations, productions, relates, shows, solves, uses.

**Analysis**

The breakdown of processes, concepts, material or other ideas into their constituent elements or parts such that the relative hierarchy of those ideas are made clear and/or the relations between the ideas expressed in the answer are made explicit. An analysis answer (a) recognizes unstated assumptions, (b) recognizes logical organization or logical fallacies in reasoning,

(c) distinguishes between facts and inferences and/or (d) conveys the basis, arrangement, and relevance of the material(s) or idea(s).

Representative Responses: Break downs, diagrams, differentiations, discriminations, distinguishes, illustrates, points out, relations, selections, subdivisions.

**Synthesis**

The unification, formulation or integration of elements and parts so as to form a different, original, or creative whole. Synthesis answers demonstrate the writer’s ability to work with pieces, parts, elements, etc. and arrange the, in such a way as to constitute a pattern,

organization, or structure not clearly revealed before. Synthesis responses reveal a writer’s ability to integrate learning from different areas into a plan for solving a problem.

Representative Responses: Categorizations, combinations, compositions, derivatives, designs, modifications, plans, rearrangements, reconstructions, reorganizations, revisions, rewrites.

**Evaluation**

Representative of the highest level of understanding, evaluation level responses support abstract judgments about the value of material, methods, and/or ideas for given purposes. Evaluation level responses: (a) judge the logical consistency of written material, (b) judge the adequacy with which conclusions are supported by data, (c) judge the “value” of a principle, law, method, theory, etc. by use of supportive internal criteria, and/or (d) judge the “value” of a principle, law, method, theory, etc. by use of supportive external standards of excellence.

Representative Responses: Appraisals, compare and contrast, critiques, discriminations, justifications, interpretations.

### Consent to Use Student Work

I, the undersigned, hereby give permission to the BYU Department of Counseling Psychology and Special Education (CPSE), the BYU David O. McKay School of Education (MSE), and Brigham Young University (BYU), or any of them, (collectively referred to as “BYU”), to use at their discretion for non-commercial, educational purposes any intellectual property which I generate in the course of my taking classes at BYU (the “Student Work”). Such Student Work may include completed class assignments, portfolios, lesson plans, inventions, and other forms of Student generated intellectual property. Possible BYU uses for the Student Work include, but are not limited to, evaluation and accreditation of University programs and activities, research, publications, scholarly presentations, the dissemination of the Student Work on CDs, websites or through other electronic means, public display using the MSE plasma screen or other display devices, or use in classes as reference and sample materials or for other instructional purposes. I understand that I will continue to own the Student Work, and that I will be given proper attribution as the owner of the Student Work pursuant to my instructions specified at the bottom of this document.

I agree that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty or adverse effects. If I wish to withdraw consent, I will deliver written notice of withdrawal to my CPSE program coordinator.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student Name |  | Signature |  | Date |
| Witness Name |  | Signature |  | Date |

(*Check and initial one option*)

* Use my full name in association with my Student Work.
* Use only my first name in association with my Student Work.
* Do not use my name in association with my Student Work.

### Consent Form for Obtaining Data from Future Employer(s)

I, the undersigned, hereby give permission to BYU to contact my future employer(s) for up to five years after graduation to gather data about my teaching performance. This data will be aggregated and will not be reported individually.

Authorization to Release Employment Information

I, the undersigned, hereby authorize my past, current or future employer(s) to provide answers to questions, documents or other information relating to my work-related performance during my tenure with such employer. This authority is granted on the condition that any data received by BYU will be aggregated and will not be reported individually or in a manner that would identify me personally.

This authorization will expire five (5) years following the date on which the authorization is given. I further hereby release my current, past or future employer(s) from any loss or injury that I may experience as a consequence of such employer providing any information to BYU.

I agree that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty or adverse effects. If I wish to withdraw consent, I will deliver written notice of withdrawal to my CPSE program coordinator.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student Name |  | Signature |  | Date |
| Witness Name |  | Signature |  | Date |