

# **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**Master's Degree and Endorsement/UW Certificate Programs**

**Special Education, College of Education, University of Wyoming  
February 13, 2017**

# Special Education Student Handbook

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## I. Program Descriptions

### **Master of Arts degree in Education with an option in Special Education**

Upon completion of this program, students will receive a Master's degree and are eligible to apply to the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board for an endorsement in K-12 Special Education. This program is cross-categorical and generalist in philosophy. The Master's degree program is offered through the UW Outreach School using distance delivery such as video-conferencing, online, intensive weekends, or combinations of delivery methods. This program requires a Master's degree Project following the completion of all course work. For full time students this program will require a fall, spring, and summer semester and a minimum of one additional semester to complete the Master's Project. In addition, if a full-time student plans to complete the program in 4 consecutive semesters, the student must begin the program in the Fall semester.

### **K-12 endorsement program in Special Education**

Upon completion of this program students are eligible to apply to the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board for an endorsement in K-12 Special Education. This program is cross-categorical and generalist in philosophy. It will allow students to teach learners with varying disabilities and learning needs. The program is offered through the UW Outreach School using distance delivery such as video-conferencing, online, intensive weekends, or combinations of delivery methods. This program does not require a Master's Project and does not lead to a Master's degree. A full-time student may complete this program in three semesters beginning in the fall semester.

### **Special Education Director Certificate**

Successful completion of a University of Wyoming Principal's Certificate in Educational Leadership and a University of Wyoming Master's degree in education with an option in special education or an endorsement in special education leads to eligibility to apply for an endorsement as a Director of Special Education through the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board.

## II. Eligibility

**Master of Arts:** Applicants who hold a BA/BS degree and have a Wyoming teaching certificate, or have submitted an application for a Wyoming teaching certificate, are eligible to apply for admission to this graduate program. Applicants who do not have a Special Education background will need to take an Introduction to Special Education course within the first two semesters of beginning program coursework. This course will not reduce the total number of credits required for the Master's degree.

**Endorsement:** Applicants who hold a BA/BS degree and have a Wyoming teaching certificate, or have submitted an application for a Wyoming teaching certificate, are eligible to apply for admission to this graduate program. Applicants who do not have a Special Education background will need to take an Introduction to Special Education course within the first two semesters of beginning program coursework. This course will not reduce the total number of credits required for the endorsement program.

**Special Education Director Certificate:** Applicants will follow the requirements for the Master's degree with an option in Special Education. Once this program and the Wyoming Principal's Certificate in Education Leadership are complete, the student may apply for an endorsement as a Director of Special Education through the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board.

### **III. Admission**

Applicants for all special education programs must apply for admission to the University of Wyoming as well as to the Special Education Program. See the website for application details (<http://www.uwyo.edu/profstudies/specialed/index.html>).

Applications are reviewed two times per year and admitted students can begin the program the following semester, although course prerequisites must be followed. Along with application materials, applicants must participate in an on campus interview with the Special Education Program faculty. Students who have been denied admission to the program may reapply, but only after one year has passed from the date of the original application. In such a case, the person reapplying for admission will need to furnish a new application and be re-interviewed.

Interested students may take a maximum of 7 credits prior to admission (EDEX 5720: Special Education Law, EDEX 5110: Positive Behavior Support and Management, or EDEX 5080: Teaching Students with Severe to Low Incidence Disabilities, EDEX 5260: Transition Program, EDEX 5250: Assistive Technology); please contact the Special Education Program Coordinator for further details.

### **IV. Program Advisor & Committee Chair**

After admission to the Master's Degree Program, the student will be assigned an advisor. Prior to February 1<sup>st</sup> following fall semester admission, the student should compose a committee, consisting of two Special Education faculty members and one faculty member outside of the Department of Professional Studies. Once the committee is established, the committee chairperson will serve as the advisor. In most cases the advisor serves as the committee chairperson, but the student may opt to select another faculty member to serve in this capacity. The committee chairperson also oversees the student's Master's Thesis or Project. All committee members must be University of Wyoming faculty members.

Students in the Endorsement program do not require a committee. The assigned advisor will oversee the student's program.

Students in the Special Education Director Certificate program require a committee if they plan to complete a Master's Degree program in Special Education.

### **V. Courses**

Several of the special education courses are sequenced and some have course prerequisites. Students must take these courses in a specific order. Students who do not have an academic or experiential background in Special Education, based on faculty evaluation at admission, may be asked to successfully complete a Special Education foundations course prior to the beginning of regular coursework.

Students must stay continuously enrolled throughout the program. After completing the required coursework, continuous enrollment may be accomplished by enrolling in PRST 5940 for at least one S/U credit each semester through the completion of the entire program.

The Master's Program requires students to take 44 credit hours for a Plan A Master's Thesis or 34 credit hours for a Plan B Project. See pages 7-9 of this handbook for suggested schedules of course completion (Tables A-D).

The Endorsement program requires students to complete 34 credit hours. See pages 7-9 of this handbook for suggested schedules of course completion (Tables A-D).

Please see page 7 for the listing of required courses. Students in the Master's program will take the classes listed in Table A; students in the Endorsement Program will take the classes listed in Table B; and students in the Special Education Director Certificate program may follow either table.

As indicated in Tables A-D (see pages 7-9), it is important to recognize that EDEX 5071, Mild/Moderate Disabilities, which is offered in the fall semester, is a prerequisite to EDEX 5110, Positive Behavior Support and Management as well as EDEX 5000, Collaboration, both of which are offered in the spring semester. Additionally, EDEX 5355, Assessment, offered in the fall, is a prerequisite to EDEX 5120, Academic Instruction in General Education for Students with Disabilities, offered in the spring. Finally, EDEX 5100, Practicum I, which is offered in the fall semester, is a prerequisite to EDEX 5200, Practicum II, which is offered in the spring semester. Practicum II is generally taken at the end of the student's coursework.

## **VI. Expectations**

Students are expected to make satisfactory progress toward their degree or endorsement goal, as described below. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress may be dismissed from the Program.

Students are required to maintain a GPA of at least 3.25. If a GPA falls below 3.25, the student will be notified that the grade point average is below the acceptable standard and will be discontinued from the program. The student may submit a written petition to the program faculty regarding this decision and explain any extenuating circumstances. The petition will be reviewed by the entire Special Education faculty. In addition, in the event a student has a course grade of C, D, or F, the student must retake the course when it is next offered. Students may not take other courses in the program until the course has successfully been completed. Students receiving two or more course grades of C, D, or F will be dismissed from the program, regardless of whether or not a course has been retaken.

Students are expected to behave in a professional manner. The Special Education program aims to model and inform students about professional behavior. As a result, we expect students to be diligent and conscientious in completing all coursework and assignments; contribute to class discussion; respect the opinions of other students and faculty even though they may disagree with them; when appropriate, seek opportunities to collaborate with classmates and participate in meaningful teamwork; be appreciative of and responsive to faculty feedback; engage in critical analysis and problem solving; ensure that writing is professional, accurate, and relevant; comply with requirements regarding confidentiality; serve as advocates for students with disabilities and the professional community; follow professional standards when interacting with learners, school staff, and other stakeholders; and dress appropriately for school and professional settings. Examples of unprofessional behavior include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, dishonesty, disruptive behavior in class, continued excused or unexcused absence from class, and any kind of abuse.

## **VII. Program Progress**

A formal review of all students in the Program will be conducted midway through each fall and spring semester. This will be done to identify students who are making satisfactory progress as well as students who are failing to make satisfactory progress. The ultimate goal of the review is to enable students to be successful in the Program. Students who are performing satisfactorily will receive a letter from the Department Head or Program Coordinator acknowledging the satisfactory performance. For students who are failing to make satisfactory progress, the function of the review is to determine remedial plans to resolve the problem, or, if it is not resolvable, to determine an exit strategy for the student. Options include but are not limited to: a meeting with the faculty member(s) and student to discuss the concern; a meeting with the faculty member(s), the student, and the Department Head/Program Coordinator; student participation in a skills development program (e.g., writing enhancement); or dismissal from the Program.

Students who have been dismissed from the program may reapply for admission but only after one year has passed from the date of dismissal. Students who choose to reapply must meet all current admission criteria as determined by Program faculty. If readmitted, transcripts will be reevaluated to determine the Program of Study. This may result in retaking one or more courses. After having been admitted to our Program, students may apply for readmission only once.

### **VIII. Master's Project**

The Master's degree program requires a Plan A (thesis) or a Plan B (project). Students may not begin coursework on a Plan A Thesis or a Plan B project until the semester following the completion of all coursework. In addition, students may not complete the thesis or project during a summer semester.

Students completing a Plan A culminating activity will write a thesis that involves conducting a qualitative or quantitative study. This thesis should add new information and content to the field and is primarily for students who wish to learn more about the research process. The student's committee must approve the thesis. The Plan A thesis requires taking research courses to include EDRE 5530 (3) and EDEX 5150 (3), and either EDRE 5640 or EDRE 5600, as well as PRST 5960 (4) (Thesis Research). See Appendix A for more detail. Note: Plan A requires three three-credit research courses and four credits of Thesis Research for a total of 13 research credits.

Students completing a Plan B culminating activity have several project options from which to choose and students are encouraged to speak with their advisor or committee chairperson in choosing an option. These include: a topical paper, a case study, or the development of a professional product (e.g. curriculum). The student's committee must approve the Master's Project.

Options for the Plan B project: (see Appendix B for more detail)

- a) Topical paper
- b) National Board Certification Portfolio
- c) Case study
- d) Product development

### **IX. Required Forms**

A variety of forms need to be completed at certain times throughout the Program. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the deadlines for these forms and to complete them in a timely way. These forms are available online on the Graduate Education website: <http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/>.

Student Handbook for the Master's Degree and Endorsement/UW Certificate Programs  
Special Education, College of Education, University of Wyoming, June 8, 2015

### **Memo of Understanding**

This is a rigorous program of study in which students are evaluated by means of the following criteria: the quality of oral and written problem solving; professional behavior; compliance with all expectations and requirements contained in the course syllabi as well as this Student Handbook; quality of written language; the ability to work collaboratively; and the successful delivery of live and/or simulated instructional/behavioral activities.

**I have read and understand the above information.**

**Student's Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

## Required Courses and Course Schedule for Special Education Programs

**Table A. Master's of Arts Program Required Courses**

| Course Number                | Course Title  | Credit Hours | Semester Offered                     | Prerequisites          |
|------------------------------|---|--------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| EDEX 5071                    | Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities                               | 3            | Fall                                 |                        |
| EDEX 5080                    | Teaching Students with Severe to Low Incidence Disabilities                     | 3            | Fall                                 |                        |
| EDEX 5720                    | Special Education Law   | 3            | Fall                                 |                        |
| EDEX 5355                    | Assessment  | 3            | Fall                                 |                        |
| EDEX 5100                    | Practicum I   | 3            | Fall                                 |                        |
| EDEX 5110                    | Positive Behavior Support and Management  | 3            | Spring                               | EDEX 5071              |
| EDEX 5000                    | Collaboration/Professional Interdisciplinary Relationships                      | 3            | Spring                               | EDEX 5071<br>EDEX 5080 |
| EDEX 5120                    | Academic Instruction in General Education for Students with Disabilities        | 3            | Spring                               | EDEX 5355              |
| EDEX 5200                    | Practicum II  | 3            | Spring                               | EDEX 5100              |
| EDEX 5150<br>or<br>EDRE 5530 | Research Applications in the Classroom<br><br>Introduction to Research          | 3<br><br>3   | Every Semester<br>Spring             |                        |
| EDEX 5250                    | Assistive Technology  | 2            | Summer                               |                        |
| EDEX 5260                    | Transition Planning   | 2            | Summer                               |                        |
| PRST 5920<br>or<br>PRST 5940 | Continuing Registration (on campus)<br><br>Continuing Registration (off campus) | 1<br><br>1   | Fall or Spring<br><br>Fall or Spring |                        |

**Table B. Endorsement/UW Certificate Program Required Courses –continued on page 8**

| Course Number | Course Title   | Credit Hours | Semester Offered | Prerequisites          |
|---------------|--|--------------|------------------|------------------------|
| EDEX 5071     | Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities                        | 3            | Fall             |                        |
| EDEX 5080     | Teaching Students with Severe to Low Incidence Disabilities              | 3            | Fall             |                        |
| EDEX 5720     | Special Education Law  | 3            | Fall             |                        |
| EDEX 5355     | Assessment   | 3            | Fall             |                        |
| EDEX 5100     | Practicum I  | 3            | Fall             |                        |
| EDEX 5110     | Positive Behavior Support and Management                                 | 3            | Spring           | EDEX 5071              |
| EDEX 5120     | Academic Instruction in General Education for Students with Disabilities | 3            | Spring           | EDEX 5355              |
| EDEX 5200     | Practicum II   | 3            | Spring           | EDEX 5100              |
| EDEX 5000     | Collaboration/Professional Interdisciplinary Relationships               | 3            | Spring           | EDEX 5071<br>EDEX 5080 |
| EDEX 5250     | Assistive Technology   | 2            | Summer           |                        |



|                              |  |   |                   |  |
|------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|--|
| EDEX 5260                    | Transition Planning                    | 2 | Summer            |  |
| EDEX 5150<br>or<br>EDRE 5530 | Research Applications in the Classroom | 3 | Every<br>Semester |  |
|                              | Introduction to Research               | 3 | Spring            |  |

**Table C. Full-time students who wish to complete coursework in 4 semesters must take the following:**

Fall Semester – 15 Credits

| Course Number | Course Title  | Credit Hours | Semester Offered | Prerequisites |
|---------------|---|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| EDEX 5071     | Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities           | 3            | Fall             |               |
| EDEX 5080     | Teaching Students with Severe to Low Incidence Disabilities | 3            | Fall             |               |
| EDEX 5720     | Special Education Law                                       | 3            | Fall             |               |
| EDEX 5355     | Assessment  | 3            | Fall             |               |
| EDEX 5100     | Practicum I   | 3            | Fall             |               |

Spring Semester – 15 Credits

|                              |  |   |                   |                        |
|------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|------------------------|
| EDEX 5110                    | Positive Behavior Support and Management                                 | 3 | Spring            | EDEX 5071              |
| EDEX 5120                    | Academic Instruction in General Education for Students with Disabilities | 3 | Spring            | EDEX 5355              |
| EDEX 5200                    | Practicum II   | 3 | Spring            | EDEX 5100              |
| EDEX 5150<br>or<br>EDRE 5530 | Research Applications in the Classroom                                   | 3 | Every<br>Semester |                        |
|                              | Introduction to Research   | 3 | Spring            |                        |
| EDEX 5000                    | Collaboration/Professional Interdisciplinary Relationships               | 3 | Spring            | EDEX 5071<br>EDEX 5080 |

Summer Semester – 4 Credits

|           |                      |   |        |  |
|-----------|----------------------|---|--------|--|
| EDEX 5250 | Assistive Technology | 2 | Summer |  |
| EDEX 5260 | Transition Planning  | 2 | Summer |  |

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|                              |                                      |   |                |  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------------|--|
| PRST 5920<br>or<br>PRST 5940 | Continuing Registration (on campus)  | 1 | Fall or Spring |  |
|                              | Continuing Registration (off campus) | 1 | Fall or Spring |  |

Note: Selection of the Plan A option requires EDRE 5530, EDEX 5150, and either EDRE 5600 or EDRE 5640, as well as four credits of PRST 5960 Thesis Research, for a total of 13 research credits. Also, Plan A and Plan B projects may begin only after all coursework has been completed, and may not be completed during the summer semester. Also, Plan A or B options, which involve human subjects, must have UW Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

**Table D. Students who wish to complete coursework in 6 semesters should take the following:**

Fall Semester (Year 1) – 9 Credits

| Course Number | Course Title                                      | Credit Hours | Semester Offered | Prerequisites |
|---------------|---|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| EDEX 5071     | Teaching Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities | 3            | Fall             |               |
| EDEX 5720     | Special Education Law                             | 3            | Fall             |               |
| EDEX 5355     | Assessment  | 3            | Fall             |               |

Spring Semester (Year 1) – 9 Credits

|                              |  |            |                          |           |
|------------------------------|--|------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| EDEX 5110                    | Positive Behavior Support and Management                                 | 3          | Spring                   | EDEX 5071 |
| EDEX 5120                    | Academic Instruction in General Education for Students with Disabilities | 3          | Spring                   | EDEX 5355 |
| EDEX 5150<br>Or<br>EDRE 5530 | Research Applications in the Classroom<br><br>Introduction to Research   | 3<br><br>3 | Every Semester<br>Spring |           |

Summer Semester (Year 1) – 4 Credits

|           |                      |   |        |  |
|-----------|----------------------|---|--------|--|
| EDEX 5250 | Assistive Technology | 2 | Summer |  |
| EDEX 5260 | Transition Planning  | 2 | Summer |  |

Fall Semester (Year 2) – 6 Credits

|           |   |   |      |  |
|-----------|---|---|------|--|
| EDEX 5080 | Teaching Students with Severe to Low Incidence Disabilities | 3 | Fall |  |
| EDEX 5100 | Practicum I   | 3 | Fall |  |

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## Spring Semester (Year 2) – 6 Credits

|           |  |   |        |                        |
|-----------|--|---|--------|------------------------|
| EDEX 5200 | Practicum II   | 3 | Spring | EDEX 5100              |
| EDEX 5000 | Collaboration/Professional Interdisciplinary Relationships | 3 | Spring | EDEX 5071<br>EDEX 5080 |

|                              |                                      |   |                |  |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------------|--|
| PRST 5920<br>or<br>PRST 5940 | Continuing Registration (on campus)  | 1 | Fall or Spring |  |
|                              | Continuing Registration (off campus) | 1 | Fall or Spring |  |

Programs that will take three or more years must be discussed with your advisor. Selection of the Plan A option requires EDRE 5530, EDEX 5150, and either EDRE 5600 or EDRE 5640, as well as four credits of PRST 5960 Thesis Research, for a total of 13 research credits. Plan A and Plan B projects may begin only after all coursework has been completed, and may not be completed during the summer semester. Plan A or B options that involve human subjects must have UW Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before beginning the research.

Students must complete all Program requirements within six years.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Culminating Activity: Master's Degree Plan A Option**

Students may elect to pursue a Plan A option. This involves writing a research thesis and employing either quantitative or qualitative research methodology. The choice of research methodology will depend on the nature of the investigation and the questions posed. Additionally, the Plan A option requires that the student enroll in EDEX 5150, EDRE 5530, and either EDRE 5640 or EDRE 5600, as well as 4 credits of PRST 5960 Thesis Research, for a total of 13 research credits. The Plan A option is designed for students interested in learning more about research methodology and the relationship between research and effective teaching. Research projects involving quantitative analysis may include, but are not limited to: group comparisons employing statistical analysis; investigation of the effects of an educational procedure or behavioral intervention using a single-subject design (e.g., multiple baseline design); survey investigation; program evaluation; or a correlation analysis. Qualitative or interpretive research investigations may include: participant observation studies; interviews; or ethnographic analyses. In either case, the following components are required for the thesis: a rationale and justification for the study; a review of the literature relevant to the study; a description of the proposed research methodology to be employed; an analysis and evaluation of the findings; and a discussion of the implications of the findings. Students will be required to have both a written and an oral defense. Plan A theses may not be completed during a summer semester.

Note: Plan A options that involve human subjects must have UW Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before beginning the research.

**See Plan A Scoring Guide/Rubric on Page 12**

### Scoring Guide/Rubric for Plan A Theses

The following scoring guide is used to evaluate the quality of the thesis.

| Component                         | Below Expectations<br>(0 pt/component)   | Meets Expectations<br>(1 pt/component)  | Exceeds Expectations (2 pts/component)   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Literature Review                 | No literature review provided. Literature cited not relevant to topic. Insufficient number of citations. Misunderstanding of literature cited.   | Adequate literature review provided. General understanding of literature reviewed. Introduction satisfactorily frames concern.  | Extensive literature review provided. Thematic strands identified. Full details provided for references paraphrased.   |
| Identification of Problem/Concern | No mention of problem/concern. Problem/concern not relevant to literature cited. Problem/concern not supported by introduction. Problem/concern is vague or ambiguous.                           | Problem/concern identified. Problem/concern based on literature reviewed.   | Thoughtful analysis of problem/concern. Persuasive justification as to why present investigation is needed.  |
| Purpose Statement                 | No purpose statement or research question(s) provided. Purpose not relevant to literature cited. Purpose not relevant to problem/concern. Purpose is vague or ambiguous.                         | Purpose statement is related to problem/concern identified.   | Purpose statement indicates and expands upon how paper/investigation addresses the issues mentioned in problem statement. Correct wording of research question(s). Clear description of variables to be manipulated. |
| Description of Methods            | Failure to describe each subsection. Unsatisfactory description of two or more subsections.  | Satisfactory description of each subsection. Description provides adequate information to replicate procedures. No inclusion of information appropriate for other sections. | Full description of the independent variable. Description of experimental design or analytic procedure is thorough. Thorough information provided to permit replication.   |
| Description of Results/Methods    | Failure to report all the findings. Inadequate description of findings.  | Adequate objective description of findings. No conclusions presented. Findings referenced to tables and/or figures.   | Full reporting of findings provided. Specific data presented. Patterns in data set identified and described. Data presented are aligned with purpose or research questions.  |
| Discussion                        | No discussion of implications of findings. No mention of limitations of investigation. No mention of future research needs. No mention of implications of findings for professional development. | Satisfactory summary of findings presented. Implications of findings for effective instruction presented. Discussion of limitations provided.                               | Comprehensive summary of findings presented. Implications of findings for effective instruction, policy, and/or professional development provided. Discussion of limitations and areas for future research provided. |
| Supporting Evidence               | Relevant tables, figures or appendices not included. No "References" section.  | Appropriate tables and figures provided. Complete "References" section provided. Appropriate appendices included.   | Publication-ready tables and/or figures included. Consumable and/or publication-ready appendices provided.   |
| APA                               | References (citations and "References" section), format of paper, tables and/or figures, and supporting evidence do not follow APA guidelines.   | Most sections (i.e., approximately 80 percent) follow APA guidelines.   | All sections and subsections of paper follow APA guidelines.   |
| Writing Mechanics                 | Two or more spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors.   | One spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical error.   | No spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors.  |

Each component of the thesis will be graded based on the rubric described above. Proficiency will be determined as follows:

**Exceeds expectations:** 16-18 points  
**Meets expectations:** 14-15 points  
**Below expectations:** 13 points or below

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Culminating Activity: Master's Degree Plan B Options**

Students may elect to pursue a Plan B non-thesis option. This option involves completing a culminating activity that will contribute to the student's professional development as well as knowledge and skills as an educator. The Plan B option requires that the student enroll in one three-credit research course, EDEX 5150, *Classroom Research Applications*, or EDRE 5530, *Introduction to Research*, OR EDRE 5550, *Action Research*. Plan B projects may not be completed during a summer semester.

Students who choose the Plan B option will consult their committee chair and other committee members in order to select one of the following options: (a) Topical Paper, (b) Case Study/Teacher Research Investigation, (c) or Product Development. Selection of an option will be based on the student's interests, the resources required, and the manageability of the project. As these options differ in purpose, intent, and structure, evaluative criteria vary for each, although standardized evaluative rubrics are included in this Student Handbook. Nonetheless, the following components should be included for all options/projects:

- A written prospectus which overviews the project,
- A rationale for the selection of the option/project,
- A review of the literature relevant to the topic,
- A description of the procedures to be used in executing the option/project,
- Results, and
- A discussion of the results and the project's implications for professional development, student learning, or educational policy or practice

Note: Plan B options that involve human subjects must have UW Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before beginning the research.

### **Plan B Option – Topical Paper**

This option is designed for Master's students who wish to learn about an educational practice, phenomenon, or policy. The topic selected should be one that is relevant for current special education teaching practices, policy development, collaboration, or other topics that positively contribute to enhancing student learning and development and/or instructional development. Topical papers must be well grounded in current research, and reach conclusions or make recommendations based on critical thinking and analysis. The paper must be logical and well-constructed, have correct syntax and structure, and follow all APA guidelines. If the committee does not believe the paper meets expectations, the student may be asked to rewrite sections of or the entire paper.

Topical papers that involve human subjects must have UW Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before beginning the research.

**See Plan B Topical Paper Scoring Guide/Rubric on Page 15**

### Scoring Guide/Rubric for Plan B Topical Paper

The following scoring guide is used to evaluate the quality of the paper.

| Component   | Below Expectations<br>(0 pt/component)  | Meets Expectations<br>(1 pt/component)  | Exceeds Expectations (2 pts/component)   |
|---|---|---|--|
| Introduction:<br>Identification of<br>Topic/Concern | No specific mention of topic/concern. Topic/Concern not relevant to literature cited. Topic/Concern not supported by introduction. Topic/Concern is vague or ambiguous.   | Topic/Concern specifically identified. Topic/Concern has educational relevance. Topic/Concern related to information presented in introduction.                 | Thoughtful analysis of how topic/concern impacts education/learning/development. Persuasive justification as to how paper will address topic/concern.  |
| Literature Review                                   | No literature review provided. Literature cited no relevant to topic. Insufficient number of citations (less than 15). Misunderstanding of literature cited.  | Literature review relevant to topic/concern. Adequate literature review provided (15+ references). Correct understanding of literature reviewed.                | Extensive literature review provided. Clear and full understanding of references cited. Topic/Concern well supported in research.  |
| Purpose Statement                                   | No purpose statement provided. Purpose not relevant to topic/concern. Purpose not relevant to literature cited in introduction. Purpose is vague or ambiguous.  | Purpose statement is related to topic/concern identified and states what paper will address.  | Purpose statement indicates and expands upon how paper addresses the issues/concerns identified in the research review. Purpose statement clearly states the major themes discussed in the paper.  |
| Description of<br>Methods                           | Failure to describe search procedure, how information will be organized, or reported.   | Satisfactory description of search procedure and organizational scheme for paper.   | Full description of the search procedure. Full description of the organizational scheme. Full description of how information will be analyzed and reported.  |
| Description of<br>Findings                          | Failure to report pertinent information about topic. Lack of understanding of reported information. Reporting of information not consistent with organization scheme of paper. Reporting of information not consistent with purpose of paper. | Adequate, correct description of topical information. No conclusions presented. Information follows organizational scheme. Information consistent with purpose. | Comprehensive and thorough reporting of information provided.  |
| Discussion  | No discussion of implications of information reported. Lack of logical organization.  | Satisfactory summary of findings presented. Implications of findings for effective instruction or professional development not provided.                        | Comprehensive summary of findings presented. Implications of findings for effective instruction, policy, and/or professional development thoughtfully and extensively discussed. Discussion of limitations in current knowledge base and areas for future research provided. |
| APA   | References (citations and References section), format of paper, tables and/or figures, and supporting evidence do not follow APA guidelines.  | Most sections (i.e. approximately 80 percent) follow APA guidelines.  | All sections and subsections of paper follow APA guidelines.   |
| Writing Mechanics                                   | Two or more spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors.  | One spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical error.   | No spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors. Well organized with a smooth flow of information.  |

Each component of the topical paper will be graded based on the rubric described above. Proficiency will be determined as follows:

**Exceeds expectations:** 14-16 points  
**Meets expectations:** 12-13 points  
**Below expectations:** 11 points or below



## **Plan B Option – National Board Certification**

The Special Education program accepts a National Board Certification Portfolio (NBC) in lieu of a Plan B paper.

The NBC Portfolios will be accepted as a Plan B Paper for teachers pursuing NBC Certification and a UW Master's degree simultaneously. This acceptance is dependent upon committee approval (not acceptance by the National Board). An agreement to utilize this procedure and maintain portfolio confidentiality has been reached between UW and the NBPTS (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards). The NBC portfolio must be submitted and defended (in a one-hour question/answer meeting with the student's graduate committee) prior to initial submission to the NBPTS. The committee's portfolio copies will be destroyed after the defense.

### **Assessment Checklist for National Board Certification (NBC)**

#### **Portfolio & Presentation**

*Committee members will evaluate the following areas and will determine if the student/NBC candidate accomplished each of these aims/activities at a level sufficient to warrant the substitution of the NBC portfolio and presentation for the Plan B requirement. An overall score of 25-30 must be achieved to serve in lieu of the Plan B paper.*

#### ***Presentation of NBC Portfolio to Master's Committee:***

- Student provides a brief overview of National Board Certification process and portfolio.
- Student describes process of working on the portfolio (including connections to Special Education courses taken, time commitment, assessments and data analysis, and reflections).
- Student presents at least one explicit connection between the portfolio documentation and his/her SpEd Master's Degree coursework (e.g., assessment strategy learned in assessment specific course was used to evaluate student work included in NBC portfolio), and explains ways processes informed each other.
- Student describes challenges, satisfaction, and difficulties associated with the NBC process.
- Student summarizes learning derived from portfolio process and completion.

**See Plan B National Board Certification Scoring Rubric on Page 17**

| <b>COMPONENT</b>     | <b>Below Expectations - 1 or 0</b>  | <b>Meets Expectations - 2</b>  | <b>Exceeds Expectations - 3</b>   |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Knowledge of student | Demonstrates little or no holistic knowledge of students as individuals and as learners, includes strengths, limitations, interests, and environments; includes impact that the exceptionality has on student's development and learning.     | Demonstrates limited holistic knowledge of students as individuals and as learners, includes strengths, limitations, interests, and environments; includes impact that the exceptionality has on student's development and learning. | Demonstrates deep and holistic knowledge of students as individuals and as learners, includes strengths, limitations, interests, and environments; includes impact that the exceptionality has on student's development and learning. |
| Content Knowledge    | Includes little or no knowledge of exceptional needs education, instructional content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge.   | Includes limited knowledge of exceptional needs education, instructional content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge.   | Includes strong, in-depth knowledge of exceptional needs education, content knowledge in the area of instruction, and pedagogical content knowledge.  |
| Question             | Question is not related to the identified and targeted need of the student or is vague, trivial or even missing   | Formulated question is related to the identified and targeted need of the student but may be inappropriate for that student or may be vague or confusing   | Formulated meaningful question is specifically related to the identified and targeted need of the student. The question has one part and is not a yes/no question.  |
| Assessment           | Does not accurately select and/or design and use an assessment tool that addresses the specific need of the featured student. The tool may not address the needs of the student at all, or it may not be useful to gather needed information. | Accurately selects and/or designs and uses an assessment tool but it may not be appropriate or not used correctly to meet the need of the featured student   | Accurately selects and/or designs and uses an assessment tool that addresses the specific need of the featured student  |
| Learning Goals       | Learning goals may not be worthwhile and meaningful or they may be missing, confusing, or not appropriate for the student   | Learning goals may not be worthwhile and meaningful or do not reflect high expectations for the student using knowledge of the student, assessment information, and sound content knowledge, or they may be                          | Develops learning goals that are worthwhile and meaningful and that reflect high expectations for the student using deep knowledge of the student, assessment information, and sound content knowledge                                |

|                   |   |  |  |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Instruction       | The teacher does not accurately analyze student responses to instruction to further his/her understanding of the student as a learner and to assess his /her own practice   | superficial or partly missing<br>Does not accurately analyze student responses to instruction to deepen his/her understanding of the student as a learner and to assess his /her own practice                                  | Accurately analyzes student responses to instruction to deepen his/her understanding of the student as a learner and to assess his /her own practice                                 |
| Diversity         | Teacher does not provide an equitable, accessible, and fair learning environment in which students are encouraged to participate.   | Teacher shows limited ability to provide an equitable, accessible, and fair learning environment in which students are encouraged to participate.  | Teacher fosters an equitable, accessible, and fair learning environment in which students are encouraged to participate.   |
| Analysis          | The teacher does not analyze and apply information from assessment tool(s) and other sources to develop goals and effective instructional approaches, analysis may be missing   | Teacher does not correctly analyze and apply information from assessment tool(s) and other sources to develop goals, effective instructional approaches and build on student's strengths                                       | Analyzes and applies information from assessment tool(s) and other sources to develop goals, effective instructional approaches and build on student's strengths                     |
| Reflection        | The teacher does not analyze his or her own observation of student achievement in order to adjust and refine his or her assessment and teaching approaches and practices. The reflection is superficial, vague, confusing, or absent. | The teacher demonstrates limited reflection in order to expand his or her ability as a teacher of students with special needs and to promote the student's development and learning. The reflection may be unfocused or vague. | Reflects insightfully on implications of assessment and its impact on decisions made for instruction and future teaching; seeks ways to improve practice to promote student learning |
| Writing Mechanics | Two or more spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors.  | One spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical error.  | No spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors. Well organized with a smooth flow of information.  |

### **Plan B Option – Case Study/Teacher Research Investigation**

Case study research involves an in-depth description and analysis of a *case*. A case can be an individual student (e.g., student with a behavioral challenge), event (e.g., Special Olympics), or process (e.g., IEP meeting). The intent of a case study is to produce a desired outcome (e.g., improvement in reading score), better understand how a system or process operates (e.g., nature of teacher-parent interactions), or provide insight about a specific educational phenomenon or practice (e.g., peer tutoring). This option is designed for Master's students who wish to resolve a problem in their classrooms (e.g., decrease classroom disruptions), promote desired learning outcomes (e.g., improve literacy for one or more students), or learn how their school and its special education services and processes operate. Although a case study may include several of the same components of single-subject or experimental research (e.g., ongoing data collection, systematic instruction), it does not seek to determine cause-and-effect relationships or suggest validity. Case study research does not require that experimental control be suggested or the formal requirements of experimental research be followed. Consequently, it includes several of the components typically employed in qualitative research; for example, the teacher is both the researcher and the data collector, the researcher's values are acknowledged and considered in the analysis, and field notes and interview data may be obtained. The rubric below describes differential quality levels for each component in a case study.

(Note: Sections of the case study paper typically include: description of the case; importance of the study; setting; data collection; records; additional data sources; intervention or analysis; results/conclusions.

Case studies that involve human subjects must have UW Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before beginning the research.

**See Plan B Case Study Scoring Guide/Rubric on Page 17**

### Scoring Guide/Rubric for Plan B Case Study

The following scoring guide is used to evaluate the quality of the case study.

| Component                         | Below Expectations<br>(0 pt/Component)  | Meets Expectations<br>(1 pt/Component)   | Exceeds Expectations (2 pts/Component)   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Identification of problem/concern | No mention of problem / concern.<br>Problem / concern not relevant to literature cited. Problem / concern is vague or ambiguous.  | Problem / concern identified. Problem / concern addressed in research literature.  | Thoughtful analysis of problem/concern.<br>Persuasive justification as to why case study is warranted.   |
| Introduction/Literature review    | No literature review provided.<br>Literature cited not relevant to concern.<br>Insufficient review of literature.<br>Misunderstanding of literature cited.                        | Adequate literature review provided.<br>General understanding of literature reviewed. Introduction satisfactorily frames concern.  | Extensive literature review provided.<br>Astute understanding of related research.<br>Logical and well organized introduction.<br>Full understanding as to how research can address existing problem.  |
| Purpose statement                 | No purpose statement or research question(s) provided.<br>Purpose not relevant to literature cited.<br>Purpose not relevant to problem/concern.<br>Purpose is vague or ambiguous. | Purpose statement is related to problem/concern identified.<br>Purpose is logically related to identified problem. Satisfactory wording of research question.                  | Purpose statement indicates and expands upon how paper/investigation addresses the problem or concern.<br>Correct wording of research question(s).<br>Clear description of variables to be manipulated.  |
| Description of Methods            | Failure to describe each subsection.<br>Unsatisfactory description of two or more subsections.  | Satisfactory description of each subsection.<br>Description provides adequate information to replicate procedures. No inclusion of information appropriate for other sections. | Full description of each subsection.<br>Description of intervention or analytic procedure is thorough. Full documentation of all data sources.   |
| Description of Results/Findings   | Failure to report all the findings.<br>Inadequate description or understanding of findings.   | Satisfactory description of findings.<br>Limited analysis of interrelationships of variables.  | Full and specific reporting of findings.<br>Patterns and interrelationships identified and described. Findings are aligned with purpose or research question.  |
| Discussion                        | No discussion of implications of findings.<br>Discussion is incomplete or illogical.<br>Conclusions are missing or not related to purpose or research question.                   | Satisfactory summary of findings presented.<br>Understanding of findings relative to purpose or research question is demonstrated but not in great detail.                     | Comprehensive summary of findings presented.<br>Implications of findings for effective instruction, policy, and/or professional development provided.<br>Understanding of outcomes/observations relative to existent research is demonstrated. Implications of findings for future research or analysis are presented. |
| APA                               | References (citations and References section), format of paper, tables and/or figures, and supporting evidence do not follow APA guidelines.                                      | Most sections (i.e., approximately 80%) follow APA guidelines.   | All sections and subsections of paper follow APA guidelines.   |
| Writing mechanics                 | Two or more spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors.  | One spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical error.  | No spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors. Well organized with a smooth flow of information.  |

Each component of the thesis will be graded based on the rubric described above. Proficiency will be determined as follows:

**Exceeds expectations:** 14-16points

**Meets expectations:** 12-13 points

**Below expectations:** 11 points or below

### **Plan B Option - Product Development**

The product development Plan B option provides the student with a learning opportunity to develop a usable educational product in a systematic, data-based procedure, following a conventional *Research and Development cycle* (R&D Cycle). Anticipated products include: instructional materials, curriculum units, instructional games, surveys, assessments, and software programs, to name a few. Following the R&D cycle, the student will correctly describe the educational product, conduct a literature review pertinent to the planned development, develop a preliminary form of the product, conduct a field test, and complete a final product revision. The rubric below is used to evaluate the quality of the product development cycle and the resultant product.

**See Plan B Product Development Scoring Guide/Rubric on Page 19**

### Scoring Guide/Rubric for Plan B Product Development Option

The following scoring guide is used to evaluate the quality of the product and procedure.

| Component                       | Below Expectations<br>(0 pt/component)   | Meets Expectations<br>(1 pt/component)   | Exceeds Expectations (2 pts/component)  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Product Selection               | A description of how the proposed product meets and educational need is not provided. The description of the proposed product is incomplete or not clear. There is no statement about how it will be used. | A clear description of how the proposed product meets an educational need is provided. A clear description of proposed product is provided, as well as how it will be used. A reasonable time line is provided to develop and test the proposed product. | A thorough and persuasive description of how the proposed product meets and educational need is provided. The proposed product is extensively described, and several objectives relating to its use are specified. The time line provided to develop and test the proposed product is highly detailed and specific. |
| Literature Review               | No literature review provided. Literature cited not relevant to product. Insufficient number of citations (less than 12). Misunderstanding of literature.  | Literature review relevant to product specified. Adequate literature review provided (12+ references). Need for product supported.   | Extensive literature review provided (15+ references). Clear and full understanding of references cited. Need for product well supported in research.   |
| Preliminary Form of the Product | Product not based on need identified in literature review. Incomplete or unsatisfactory description of product is provided. No description on how to use the product is provided.                          | Product developed is based on local need and professional need identified in literature review. Adequate description of product is provided. Adequate description on how to use product is provided.   | Extensive and highly detailed description of product is provided. Clear, easy-to-follow directions on how to use the product are provided.  |
| Field Test                      | No mention of field test is provided. Inadequate description of how field test will be conducted.  | Adequate description of field test is provided (e.g., number of participants, how feedback will be obtained).  | Detailed description of how field test will be conducted. Formal analysis of feedback conducted (i.e., pre-/posttest). Clear description of how feedback will be used to make revisions.  |
| Final Product Revision          | No revisions made based on feedback. Inadequate number of revisions made.  | All revisions made based on feedback.  | Revisions made are discussed in terms of field test data, functional objectives of product, and anticipated findings.   |
| Implementation                  | Product is not used. No outcomes reported.   | Adequate description of outcomes presented.  | Full description of outcomes provided. Thoughtful discussion of how findings will impact instructional delivery, professional practice, or district/agency policy.  |
| APA                             | References (citations and References section), format of paper, tables, data and figures, and supporting evidence do not follow APA guidelines.  | Most sections (i.e., approximately 80 percent) follow APA guidelines.  | All sections and subsections of paper follow APA guidelines.  |
| Writing Mechanics               | Two or more spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors.   | One spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical error.  | No spelling, punctuation, syntax or grammatical errors. Well organized with a smooth flow of information.   |

Each component of the thesis will be graded based on the rubric described above. Proficiency will be determined as follows:

**Exceeds expectations:** 14-16 points  
**Meets expectations:** 12-13 points  
**Below expectations:** 11 points or below