

*Master of Science in  
Special Education*

Graduate Student Handbook

Updated Summer 24

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Department of Special Education would like to acknowledge the Department of Secondary Education for its collegial spirit in allowing us to use and adapt the material in its *MSE Student Guidebook*. We deeply appreciate your generosity. Thank you!



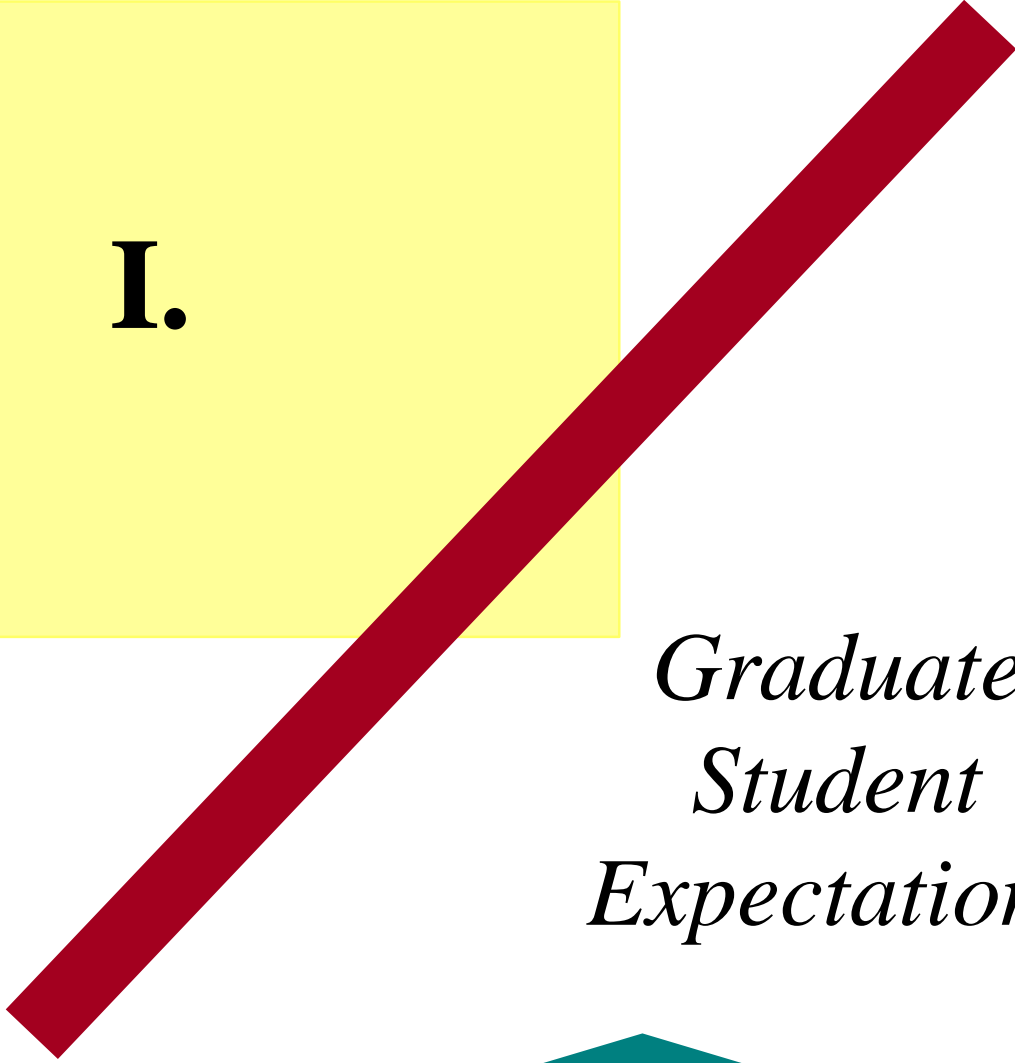
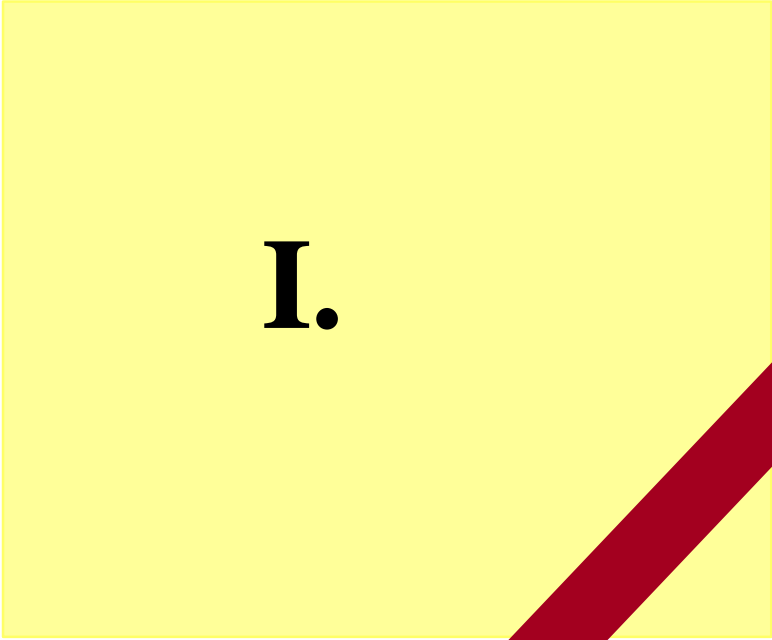
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
**FULLERTON**

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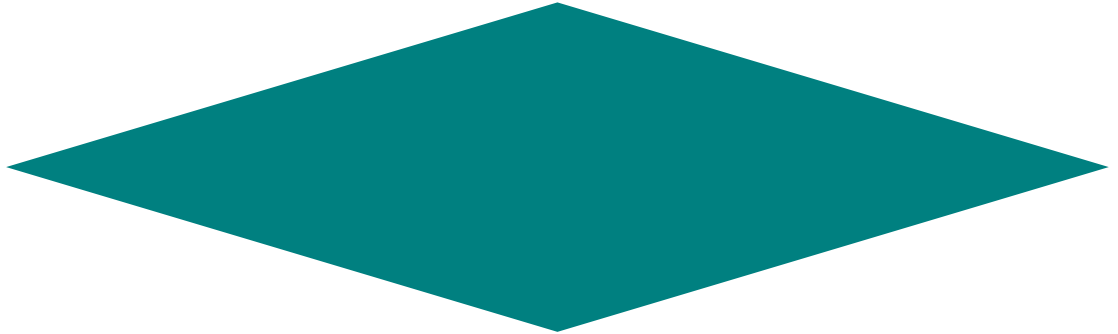
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*Graduate  
Student  
Expectations*



# **Just, Equitable, and Inclusive Education (JEIE)**

## **JUST EDUCATION**

A commitment to meet the educational needs of all students in a fair, caring, respectful, non-discriminatory manner (NCATE, 2008). This includes recognizing and understanding the impact of one's own privileges, biases, perspectives and beliefs on the interactions one has with students.

## **EQUITABLE EDUCATION**

A process that goes beyond providing equal opportunities, seeking to guarantee access to resources and to the challenges and supports necessary for all students to attain high-quality outcomes, not predicted by race, ethnicity, SES, gender, family structure, first language, religion, sexual orientation, (im)migration status, or disability.

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

A perspective that acknowledges, recognizes, and respects the knowledge and strengths all students bring from their communities (e.g., cultural, ethnic, disability, and linguistic) and makes community-based knowledge an integral component of curricular and pedagogical development. In this way, we as educators learn to value and draw upon students' backgrounds not only as a means to support them in developing tools to participate with success in the broader society but also as a mechanism to transform how we do our work.

For more resources, please visit the below link

<http://ed.fullerton.edu/community/just-equitable-and-inclusive-education-resources.php>

# Candidate Dispositions

Faculty model and encourage all candidates to reflect dispositions that represent the values and attitudes expected of professionals in the field of education. These dispositions are based on the Education Unit's conceptual framework and encompass several behavioral indicators within the three program outcomes. As candidates move through their programs, it is expected they demonstrate *a commitment to fairness and a belief that all children can learn* through an increasing ability to:

## **PROMOTE DIVERSITY**

Candidates demonstrate a commitment to just, equitable, and inclusive education that meets the needs of all students in a caring, respectful, and non-discriminatory manner. In their work as future teachers and educational leaders, candidates identify and provide the academic support necessary for all students to attain high-quality outcomes. Candidates respect and value the inclusion of multiple perspectives, voices, styles of learning, and abilities and are responsive to students' diverse backgrounds and experiences.

## **ENGAGE IN COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVORS**

Candidates demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that promote respectful and collaborative relationships with families, colleagues and other professionals to support student learning and well-being. In their work with others, candidates model and encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

## **THINK CRITICALLY**

Candidates systematically reflect on their practice and constructive criticism from others to make informed decisions and grow as effective educators and specialists. In their work with others, they use a variety of formal and informal assessments to evaluate progress and performance, identify individual and group needs, and modify their teaching and/or leadership strategies for program and individual growth and improvement.

## **MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS**

Candidates understand and fulfill the ethical and professional responsibilities of educators and specialists as defined in state, national, and institutional standards. They display the emotional maturity, academic integrity, and professional commitment necessary to successfully demonstrate these standards in their work with students, families, and other professionals.

## **VALUE LIFE-LONG LEARNING**

Candidates understand that professional development is a continuing process. They demonstrate the necessary skills to take responsibility for planning and pursuing their ongoing learning, reflecting with colleagues in their practice, and for contributing to the knowledge-base of the profession. In the field they act as responsible change agents by contributing to the school as a learning organization to foster student learning and well-being.

For more information, please visit the below link.

<http://ed.fullerton.edu/about-the-college/accreditation-assessment/candidate-dispositions.php>

## **Graduate Academic Standards**

Please check with the Graduate Office for updated information on academic standards for graduate students.

### **University Grade-Point Average**

A graduate degree student is expected to earn a 3.0 average in all units subsequent to admission to the program. In addition, a graduate degree student must earn a 3.0 average in all 500-level courses taken in the student's department or program (including 500-level **program prerequisites and any transfer courses**).

### **Study Plan Grade-Point Average**

The 30 or more semester units of approved study plan coursework, including transfer work, required for the degree must be completed with a 3.0 (B) minimum grade-point average. Only grades of A or B are considered satisfactory for study plan courses. If a student receives a grade less than a B on a study plan course, the course must be repeated and passed with a grade of B or better. A course may be repeated only once. In extenuating circumstances, the student can petition the Office of Graduate Studies to add another course to the approved program with unit value equivalent to that of the course in which the unsatisfactory grade was received.

Requests for coursework to be added to the study planner must be repeated and approved by the graduate program advisor and Office of Graduate Studies before registration (see "Changes in Study Plan"). If the grade point average at any time falls below such a level it cannot be raised to a 3.0 within the prescribed limits of coursework, this has the effect of disqualifying the student from the master's degree program.

If permission is given to repeat courses, both grades are considered in computing grade-point averages. However, successfully repeating courses originally passed carries no additional unit credit toward a degree.

When a course is added, the original course stays on the study plan, and both grades received shall be used in the calculation of the student's GPA.

### **Academic Notice and Disqualification**

A graduate student enrolled in a graduate degree program in either conditionally classified or classified graduate standing is subject to academic notice if a cumulative grade point of at least 3.0 (grade of B on a four-point scale) is not maintained. A listing of students subject to academic notice is reviewed each semester by the Office of Graduate Studies with the advice of the student's department graduate program adviser.

The Office of Graduate Studies, with the advice of the student's department graduate program adviser, will disqualify a graduate student who is on academic notice if the student does not, or cannot, raise the study and applicable coursework cumulative grade-point average to 3.0 by



the completion of the regular semester (exclusive of interim and summer sessions) following the session in which the cumulative grade-point average meets the minimum 3.0 standard.

A student who has been disqualified from a master's degree program from a postbaccalaureate credential or certificate program may apply for readmission to that program or to another program after one calendar year following disqualification. A readmitted student must file a new study plan that meets current requirements and policies. Any disqualified student who wishes to use previous coursework must have it approved by the Office of Graduate Studies. Disqualification will remove the student from graduate standing and prevent further enrollment in the university.

A graduate student may also be placed on academic notice or disqualified for reasons other than cumulative grade-point average. These reasons include repeated withdrawal, failure to progress toward an educational objective, non-compliance with an academic requirement, and inappropriate behavior as defined in the Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and in the Academic Dishonesty sections of this catalog(see "University Regulations").

A postbaccalaureate student(credential, unclassified, or undeclared status) will be subject to academic notice if, after completing 12 or more units, the cumulative grade-point average falls below the 3.0 average. A postbaccalaureate student on probation will be disqualified if the cumulative grade-point average is not raised to 3.0 the semester after being placed on academic notice. Disqualification may be either from further registration toward a postbaccalaureate credential or certificate program or from further enrollment in the university as determined by the Director of Graduate Studies.

### **Declassification**

Graduate students in classified graduate standing shall be declassified upon the recommendation of the appropriate academic unit, with a change to postbaccalaureate standing, unclassified, when one or more of the following conditions exist:

1. The student's request for declassification has been recommended for approval by the graduate committee.
2. The student fails to maintain the grade-point average required in the master's degree program.
3. The student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory scholastic competence and fitness.
4. The student fails to complete the degree within the prescribed time limit.
5. The graduate program adviser sends A recommendation for declassification to the Graduate Studies Office for the particular degree.

## Transfer Credit Policy

Graduate students may be able to use a limited amount of transfer coursework to meet the requirements for a master's degree. The use of a transfer course on a student's study is subject to the following provisions:

1. Each course transferred must:
  - a. have been taken at an accredited college or university.
  - b. be acceptable for credit toward a graduate degree at the institution where the course work was taken.
  - c. have been completed with a better grade of B or.
  - d. not have been used to meet the requirements for another earned degree (either graduate or undergraduate).
  - e. have been completed within the student's five-year time period, which is required for completion of the requirements for the master's degree at CSUF.
2. A minimum of 21 semester units toward any master's degree at CSUF must be in residence units. For master's degrees requiring more than 42-semester units, at least half of the units used in the student's study plan must be in residence units. Residence units are granted for courses taken at the university during regular sessions in the fall and spring and any special session.
3. Use of transfer work on a student's study plan is subject to all other policies concerning study plan coursework; e.g., fifty percent must be graduate-level work, no correspondence coursework, no credit by examination, and no courses with non-traditional grades.
4. In all cases, transfer coursework on a student's study plan is subject to the acceptance and approval of the academic unit's graduate adviser and the Office of Graduate Studies. Coursework taken at another institution after admission to CSUF as a graduate student is rarely accepted for credit toward a master's degree and can only be accepted if the student has received prior approval from both the graduate adviser and the Office of Graduate Studies.
5. Extended Education credits can only be accepted if they qualify as graduate credits at the institutions where they were offered.
6. All approved transfer units and grade points will be entered into the CSUF transcript upon graduation.
7. Unless an exception dictates, only graduate level courses will be allowed on student study plans.

## ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE

A graduate student may be placed on notice for reasons other than cumulative and/or study plan grade-point average.

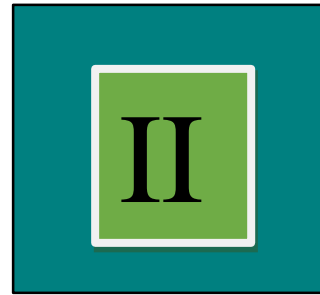
Reasons for this administrative-academic notice include:

- Repeated withdrawal
- Failure to progress toward an educational objective
- Non-compliance with an academic requirement
- Failure to demonstrate a level of professional competence or
- Academic Dishonesty (see University Regulations, catalog page 514).
- Inappropriate behavior as defined under "Student Conduct" (Catalog page 517)

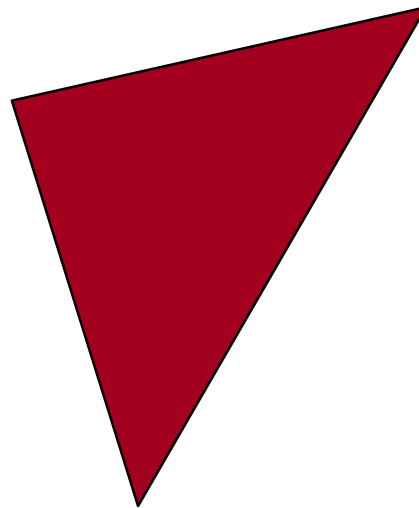
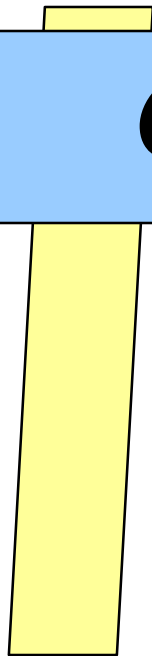
Students will remain on administrative-academic notice contingent upon conditions required to continue the program.

Students placed on administrative probation will be disqualified if:

1. The conditions for removal of administrative-academic notice are not met within the period specified.
2. The student becomes subject to academic notice while on administrative-academic notice.
3. The student is removed from administrative-academic notice and subsequently becomes subject to administrative-academic notice for the same or similar reasons as originally placed on notice.



*Coursework*



# SPED 501

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Sped 501 is a required prerequisite one-unit course that is offered credit/ no credit and does not apply to the graduate study plan. The course provides an overview of the graduate special education program. It allows students to identify major issues in special education, develop a program plan and project/thesis agenda based on these issues, and set goals for their graduate work. In addition, it is the vehicle through which interviews are conducted. Finally, Successful completion of Sped 501 is required to become a classified graduate student.

## REQUIRED COURSES

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**All students must complete a core of 21 course units.** Some of these courses may also overlap with courses required for completion of one's teaching credential in Special Education. Nevertheless, all courses at the 500 level are considered graduate-level courses. As such, the rigor of these courses will be at the graduate level.

## ELECTIVE COURSES

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**All students must complete 6 elective course units. It depends on your exit option.** During the Study Plan meeting, these courses will be identified in consultation with the Department Graduate Program Advisor. Elective courses may include those taken as required courses for one's teaching credentials, but only 500-level courses (or approved 400-level courses) are recommended as elective courses.

### **Project option (3 units): SPED 597**

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Students must take the initiative to meet with their project committee chair to identify objectives or plans that the student will complete during the course. It is the responsibility of the student to meet with the project committee chair and complete all identified objectives or plans.

## **SPED 595 (Comprehensive Exam Option): 3 units**

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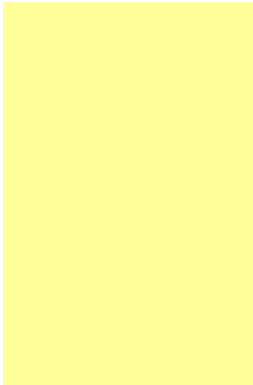
Students must take the initiative to meet with their comprehensive exam committee chair to identify objectives or plans that the student will complete during the course. The student is responsible for meeting with the exam committee chair and completing all identified objectives or plans.

*Although you will not have a "course" in which you will complete your exam/project, there are certain classes in which the skills you will need to conduct and complete your exam/project are available.*

*Students must realize that completing coursework does not mean completing the degree. Coursework is only part of the degree requirements. The culminating activity of the degree is the exam/project. Without the project, one will not complete the degree requirements and will not graduate. Also, the remaining option is to complete SPED 595: The Written Exam in place of the sped 597)*



# III.



*Differences  
Among  
Exit Options*

# **Two Options (Comprehensive Exam or Project)**

## **Comprehensive Exam Option**

To exit the program by completing a comprehensive exam option, you must enroll in SPED 595: Comprehensive Exam. This course should be taken during the semester you plan to graduate. The Comprehensive Exam assesses multiple skills and abilities, including the following: (1) mastery of content knowledge, (2) ability to integrate knowledge, (3) demonstration of critical thinking/analysis skills, (4) high-level writing competency, and (5) accuracy of documentation. The Comprehensive Exam is an essay exam covering content from your Master contract courses. The exam consists of 3 questions and is 4 hours long, administered in 4-hour blocks. During the exam, you will be given two questions in your area of specialization (mild/moderate, extensive support needs, or early childhood). The additional 1 question will consist of one general education question or one research question. The exam will be taken on a computer here on campus. If you choose this exit option, you will work closely with the chair.

The exam is only three questions, and it is only 4 hours long... and was completed in one morning .. not two time periods...



## **Project Option**

To exit the program by completing a professional project, you must enroll in SPED 597: Project. This course should be taken during the semester in which you plan to graduate. It will be the capstone course for your program and will help you complete your project.

**However, you should have completed the majority of the work for your project prior to enrolling in SPED 597.** You should plan to use SPED 597 to finish your project—not begin it. You should allow a minimum of 100 hours to complete your project.

All students need to adhere to the project deadlines established by the department and readily available on the Department of Special Education website and Graduate Program bulletin board. **If you choose this exit option, you will work closely with your committee chair, but the research rubric below should prove helpful to you.**

# Rationale for Project Option

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The project option allows students to engage in pragmatic/action research. In completing the special education Concentration requirements, students have greater flexibility in the type of research required for completing a project. Projects can be very practical in dealing with specific issues in your school or district, such as action research. In addition, it typically (see your committee chair for clarification) It does not have to be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Office and does not need to be microfilmed (which saves the student money). The project option may be the best choice if your intended audience is yourself, your school, or your professional community.

Because projects fulfill a wide variety of practical and applied purposes, the nature of both the process for completing a given project and its end result (product) will also vary greatly. Therefore, the student should work closely with the project committee chair to design a substantive, purposeful, and systematic approach to completing the project. The first step in planning is to clearly define the goals of the project. In most cases, some literature review will be necessary to ensure an informed perspective. The search process might also include using additional resources such as textbooks and publisher materials, curriculum standards, policy statements, technology tools, or human resources.

The project committee chair is the person who directly supervises the project, is responsible for the final evaluation of the project and has the authority to assign a grade for the project when completed. It is expected that the project committee chair and the student will meet regularly to discuss the student's work. The grade that is assigned to the project by the project committee chair appears on the student's transcript as a grade for SPED 597 (project).

The student must write a formal proposal for the project (See the *Culminating Project Proposal Form* located in the Appendixes of this guidebook). The project proposal should describe the project to be undertaken in sufficient detail to serve as a basis for the project's evaluation. The detailed content and format requirements for the proposal are defined by the project committee chair and the candidate. The project committee chair may advise students to work closely with additional faculty with expertise in the candidate's topic.

## Steps in Writing a Project

The project will have two components, one being a creative or pragmatic work and the second being a theoretical defense of the work. The product might focus on writing for publication, classroom-based research, curriculum projects, or any other product of interest to you. Many people utilize the work they have done in other classes and expand it into a complete project. Others have turned a school-based assignment into a project for their degree.

The following steps are recommended for you to complete your project.

1. Obtain the SPED 597 code number and register through the normal process. It is recommended that you officially enroll in the course during the semester that you will complete the project. You should, however, contact your committee chair and work on the project before you officially enroll. If you do not complete the project the semester you enroll, you will receive an "in progress" grade (RP). Remember that you must be officially enrolled in the university the semester your project is completed to receive a graduation check. Non-enrollment during the final semester disqualifies you from using the university facilities, including the library.

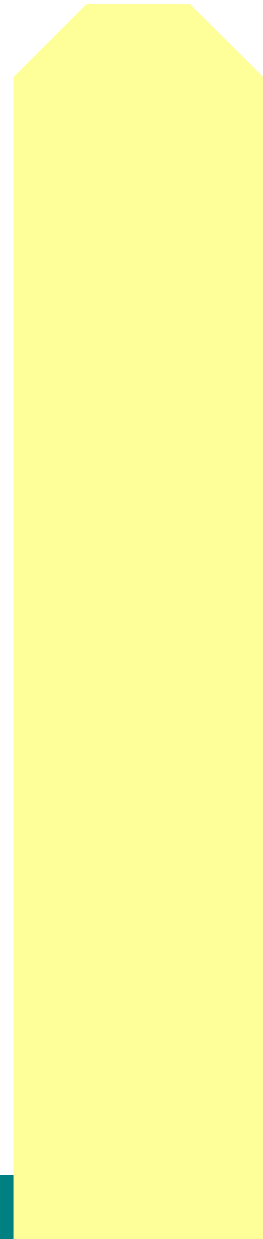
2. Choose your committee chair. With your faculty advisor's assistance, the graduate program advisor will choose your project chair.

The committee chair gives you direction, guidance, and support.

3. Consult with your committee chair. Your major contact will be your project committee chair. Use this person to answer questions, direct your efforts, or act as a sounding board for your ideas. The committee chair's responsibility will be to answer your questions and guide your independent work. Seek your committee chair's help whenever needed.



*Course  
Sequence*



## **Online Academic Plan (MSE Special Education)**

The following prerequisite course is required:

Special Ed 501 Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 unit)- This course is offered during summer

### **Core Classes (21 units)**

**Special Ed 510** Research Methods and Statistics (3 units)

**Special Ed 522** Positive Behavior Support (3 units)

**Special Ed 551** Bilingual/Multicultural Special Education: Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction

**Special Ed 586** Current Trends/Issues in Special Education (3 units)

**Special Ed 504** Advanced Proficiency in Educational Technologies (3 units)

**Special Ed 529** Collaborative and Consultative Seminar (3 units)

**Special Ed 502** Advanced Autism (3 units)

### **500-Level Elective (6 units)**

**Special Ed 515** Preschool Assessment and Intervention (3 units)

**Special Ed 520** Assessment in Special Education (3 units)

**Special Ed 400** Early Childhood Special Education (3 units)

**Special Ed 421** Working with Families of Individuals with Disabilities (3 units) **Special**

**Ed 463** Characteristics of Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities (3 units)

**Special Ed 464** Characteristics of Students with Extensive Support Needs (3 units) **Special Ed**

**465** Characteristics of Students with Mild to Extensive Support Needs (3 units)

*\*\*Note: Choose two courses above.*

### **Culminating Experience (3 units)**

The adviser approved that candidates opting for the Special Ed 595 Comprehensive Exam or Special Ed 597 Project

**Special Ed 595** Culminating Seminar in Special Ed with comprehensive exam\*

OR **Special Ed 597** Project

## Course Sequence (MSE Special Education)

Special Ed 501 Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 unit)- This course must be taken a summer before you start the program.

### The first semester

**Special Ed 510** Research Methods and Statistics (3 units)

**Special Ed 586** Current Trends/Issues in Special Education (3 units)

### The second semester

**Special Ed 504** Advanced Proficiency in Educational Technologies (3 units)

**Special Ed 502** Advanced Autism (3 units)

### The summer

**Special Ed 551** Bilingual/Multicultural Special Education: Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction

### The final semester

The adviser approved that candidates opting for the Special Ed 595 Comprehensive Exam or Special Ed 597 Project

**Special Ed 595** Culminating Seminar in Special Ed with a comprehensive exam

OR **Special Ed 597** Project

**Special Ed 529** Collaborative and Consultative Seminar (3 units)

### Electives (choose two)\*\*

**Special Ed 515** Preschool Assessment and Intervention (3 units)

**Special Ed 520** Assessment in Special Education (3 units)

**Special Ed 522 Positive Behavior Support (3 units) under the Core section in your study plan**

**Special Ed 400** Early Childhood Special Education (3 units)

**Special Ed 421** Working with Families of Individuals with Disabilities (3 units) **Special**

**Ed 463** Characteristics of Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities (3 units)

**Special Ed 464** Characteristics of Students with Extensive Support Needs (3 units) **Special Ed**

**465** Characteristics of Students with Mild to Extensive Support Needs (3 units)

**\*\*If you are from our credential program, you can transfer two electives with SPED 522.**

**If you're from another institution and want to transfer any postbacc. equivalent courses, complete the course equivalency form with any evidence documents available on the SPED website, and submit it to me.**



VI



*Programming  
Yourself  
For Success*

## Planning Ahead

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**It is important that you spread the work on your master's project/exam over the entire time you are in the graduate program.** Putting off this work will only result in being overwhelmed later in the program. The quality of your project or thesis will suffer, and you will experience more stress. Managing the work for your culminating experience is no different than managing the many projects that teachers have on their desks at any given time. Your culminating experience is a "long-term homework assignment" that is not attached to a specific course. Although you will receive assistance in various courses, you should use initiative and self-management to complete the culminating experience in a timely manner.

Please keep in mind that you need to turn in a full/complete draft of your thesis or project for faculty review well before the end of the semester when you are graduating (this date can be found on the Special Education Department website and Graduate Program bulletin board).

## Getting Ready

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All MSE Special Education students are required to take SPED 501, Introduction to Graduate Studies in Special Education, no later than the first semester in the master's program. In this course you will be provided a detailed overview of the emphasis in the Special Education graduate program, prepare your Study Plan, develop skills in APA writing style, explore possible research topics, and become familiar with library resources.

### Exploring Topics

One important requirement of SPED 501 is the completion of a series of steps designed to help you explore project topics and narrow down your choices. The process of selecting the specific research question/s can be illustrated by thinking of a funnel. They are wide at the top and narrow at the bottom. You first circle over the top of the funnel with a list of ideas, then focus on one idea or a closely related group of similar ideas, problems, or issues. Keep in mind that it is possible to switch topics further into the process; unless the topic is closely related to the one you selected earlier, you will have to start over at the beginning of the process.

### Narrowing Your Topic

By the end of your first semester, you should select a topic that will be the focus of your research for your culminating experience. At this point, the topic will still be broader than your final research question, but must be sufficiently narrow so that you can move on the next step. For example, "Inclusion" is far too broad. "Teachers' perceptions of inclusion" is more narrow, but still too broad. "Teachers' perceptions of including students with disabilities" is more precise, but "General education teachers' perceptions of including high school students with disabilities in science classes" is much more precise and focused.



## Finding and Utilizing Resources

### Library Resources

To determine whether there is sufficient information and research on your topic, you will need to search the OPAC online card catalog for the Pollak Library, which can be found at this Web address: [www.library.fullerton.edu](http://www.library.fullerton.edu). You should also check to see how much information is available from the PsychoInfo and ERIC databases that are also available from the Pollak Library. If you have not done so already, you need to get a Titan Card (PLS-140, 278-3555) to check out the material.

The library also offers orientation sessions that will be very helpful in learning how to use many electronic resources. Information on sessions for beginners can be found at: <http://guides.library.fullerton.edu/introduction>. A list of sessions for advanced library skills can be found at: <http://guides.library.fullerton.edu/advanced>. In all likelihood, you will need to participate at both levels. You will also attend a library orientation in your SPED 501 course.

**In-depth Research consultations are available to CSUF students and faculty for individual research assistance on specific research assignments, topics, or thesis.** To expedite the effectiveness of your session, it is suggested that you conduct a preliminary search of the literature prior to requesting individual consultation. Once you have completed this preliminary search you can explain to the research consultant what you have already accomplished and where you are having the most difficulty. This information will help the research consultant to help you more effectively and efficiently.

### Internet Resources

You should also seriously consider purchasing Titan Access, an Internet service the university provides for \$15 per month. Any of the full-text items on the many library databases are available from your home computer if you subscribe to Titan Access. If you want to work from home doing research is a very valuable tool. Go to <http://access.fullerton.edu> for information about Titan Access. All MSE graduate students are required to have Internet access and an email address.

## Helpful Advice

### Collaboration with Colleagues

You must complete your own culminating experience (exam/ project). However, if there is a topic that interests more than one student, it is possible to share library resources. For example, one student might be examining strategies to improve upper-grade math scores on state exams. A second student might be researching teacher attitudes about strategies to improve upper-grade math scores on state exams. Both students would need library sources on math strategies.

### Editing Buddies

Every student should identify 2-3 editing buddies, at least one of whom is a fellow student. We recommend groups of three, but no more than four. Working with colleagues who share some

commonality in their topics will help everyone in the group to produce a better culminating document. Your editing buddies should read and edit your drafts before you turn them into a faculty member.

### **Keeping Track of Information**

Most students find that making copies of the articles, reports, or chapters they plan to use is helpful because they can make notes directly on the material and sort them into categories. Ensure you copy the title page and note all the information necessary to provide a complete citation and reference entry. You could also write the complete citation on your copy of the article. Endnote is an affordable computer program that manages and supports your references. Endnote is available for review and purchase on the Internet, <http://www.endnote.com/>.

### **Using Technology**

The Department of Special Education has its own technology policy. All MSE students must read this document (See Appendixes) and be familiar with its contents. If you do not have the minimum competencies in this area, you will need to seek assistance in this area.

## **APA Format**

### **APA Format Required**

The department requires that you use the citation system of the American Psychological Association, generally referred to as “APA.” We use APA because it is used in most educational writing. The citation system sets the rules for formatting both citations to work in the body of your writing and the references list at the end. The purpose of a citation system is to give the critical information necessary so that anyone can find the sources you have used. All required information such as the name of the author, year published, publisher, city where published, etc. The advantage of APA is that it is very easy to incorporate citations in the body of your writing. You just have to top the author’s last name and year published (if you are quoting—add the page number too). For example, (Anderson, 2022, p. 19). Regardless of the citation system used, credit must be given to those whose content/ideas have been used, and APA format is the accepted format for the field of Education.

When no direction is given in this guidebook on a topic, follow the APA Manual. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7<sup>th</sup> Edition)* is available from the Titan Bookstore and from any online bookseller (ISBN 1557988102) and is required for many of your SPED classes. Also published by APA is *Mastering APA Style: Instructor’s Resource Guide* by Gelfand and Walker. It is designed as a self-paced, self-teaching workbook that can be used to learn APA style (ISBN 1557980845). The cost is approximately \$30.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

An annotated bibliography gives the full citation as it would be listed at the end of a project/exam. It adds a paragraph about the content and usefulness of the source. The following is a sample annotation from an annotated bibliography about research methods. (You will be completing an Annotated Bibliography in SPED 501).

### **Sample Annotation**

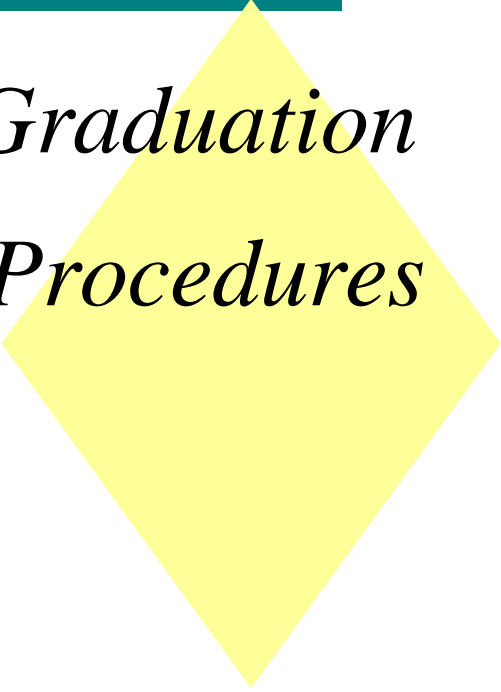

#### **Example of a Book**

Yin, R. (1993). *Applications of case study research*: Sage Publications.

This 130-page paperback will be very useful for students who wish to use qualitative methods or who are interested in using case studies to test a single theory or rival theories. There are good examples of case studies that have been done in the education field and a separate chapter on using case studies as an evaluation tool. Excellent examples abound in using visual models to analyze and present case study data.



VI



*Graduation  
Procedures*

# General Graduation Procedures

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\* = Action initiated by student (as indicated below)

● = Action initiated by the university

## 1. Admission to Graduate Standing: Conditionally Classified

- \* Apply for admission
- \* Declare objective(s), using precise codes on the application form
- \* Receive application acknowledgement from the Admissions Office
- \* Request two sets of official transcripts of all previous college-level coursework attempted to be sent to the Admissions Office
- \* Take tests, if required by the program, and order test scores sent to Cal State Fullerton, designating appropriate academic unit on the test registration form
- \* Consult the appropriate academic unit for advisement
- \* Provide appropriate academic unit with any other supporting statements or materials, as required
- Recommendation for admission made by the academic unit to the Admissions Office
- Receive notification of admission from the Admissions Office

## 2. Graduate Standing: Classified

- \* Complete any course prerequisites and/or remove deficiencies
- \* Apply for classified standing in the academic area offering the particular program prior to completion of nine units of study plan coursework
- \* Consult appropriate academic unit for advisement, including the development of official study plan
- \* Provide appropriate academic units with any other supporting statements or materials, as shown in program descriptions in this catalog.
- \* Take tests if the program requires, and order test scores sent to Cal State Fullerton, designating appropriate academic units on the test registration form.
- Recommendation made by the academic unit to the Office of Graduate Studies
- When the Office of Graduate Studies sends the study plan showing approval, it receives the notification of classified standing being granted from Graduate Studies.
- \* Call the academic unit sponsoring the degree or Graduate Studies if not received within a reasonable time.

### 3. Completion of Requirements

- \* Apply for a graduation check and/or advancement to candidacy prior to the beginning of the final semester and no later than the deadline for initiating university review and formal approval by faculty. The form is available at the Admissions and Records Information and the Graduate Studies Office. When filing the request with the university cashier, a graduation and diploma fee must be paid.
- \* Consult the appropriate academic unit for advisement
- \* Complete written and/or oral examination, if required. Complete the exam or project, if applicable
- \* Obtain approval signatures of committee members
- Final, approved study plan, with the recommendation, sent by the appropriate academic unit to the Office of Graduate Studies
- Preliminary approval, pending adequate grades and completion of any other requirements, granted by the Office of Graduate Studies
- \* Upload the approved copy of the thesis or project on the Canvas course site.
- \* Complete all general and specific requirements, other than final course examinations, by the last day of classes to ensure the degree's granting by the end of the semester.
- \* Complete the MS Exit survey and submit verification of completion to the Graduate Program Advisor.
- Final verification of completion of requirements sent by the Graduate Studies Office to the registrar
- Receive notification of the degree award from the registrar approximately eight weeks after the end of the semester.

### 4. Commencement

- \* Make appropriate cap, gown, and hood rental arrangements in the campus bookstore.
- Commencement information sent by the Registrar's Office

### Completion of Requirements and Award of Degree

The degree is awarded upon the satisfactory completion of all state and university requirements, the specific requirements for the particular program, the recommendation of the appropriate graduate adviser and committee (advancement to candidacy), and the approval of the faculty and the Office of Graduate Studies. All work for the degree, except final course examinations, should be submitted by the last day of classes to ensure granting of the degree by the end of the semester or session.

It is the **student's responsibility** to file an application for a graduation check and pay the graduation and diploma fees prior to the beginning of the final semester. Forms are available at the Admissions and Records Service Center and the Graduate Studies Office.

The application for graduation initiates a review of degree requirements and formal approval by the faculty, which serves as a diploma order. **The last date to file the application is listed**

**in the front inside cover of the class schedule for each regular semester.** Candidates for August graduation must file their requests before spring semester registration.

Students who fail to complete requirements as planned must update the application for a graduation check by the appropriate deadline. A fee is required to change the graduation date.

### **GS700 Enrollment**

Students who have completed all coursework on the study plan and are continuing to work on exam or project preparations have two options for registration:

**GS700 through regular restriction:** Students pay full fees and receive full student benefits (health center, student activities, etc.)

2. **GS700 through University Extension:** Students enroll by paying a reduced fee and receive

no university benefits other than library privileges. Permission to enroll through extended education is monitored through the Graduate Studies office using request forms signed off by the graduate program advisor and, for international students, an advisor in International Education and Exchange. No student will be permitted to enroll in GS700 through Extended Education without a form.

Registration materials will be released through the Graduate Studies office. Graduate program advisers will be sent a list of students enrolled in this special GS700.

**VII**

**Important  
Forms**





**Photography and Videography Release Form**

I grant permission to employees and agents of The California State University system (CSU), of which the Fullerton campus (CSUF) is a part, to obtain and disseminate photography and/or videography in which I am featured.

I agree that The California State University (CSU) system owns all photography and/or videography rights.

I waive any right to inspect, approve, or be compensated for the photography and/or videography.

I agree that photography and/or videography may be used on multiple communication platforms and channels without my being notified.

I release the CSU, CSUF, and its employees and agents from any claims, damages, or liability concerning obtaining or using photography and/or videography.

I am at least 18 years of age and competent to sign this release. I read this release before signing; I understand its contents, meaning, and impact and freely accept the terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone or email address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian if under 18 years of age

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (optional)



RELEASE OF LIABILITY, PROMISE NOT TO SUE, ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND AGREEMENT TO PAY CLAIMS

Activities include but are not limited to student teaching, data collection, student observation, fieldwork, mentorship, clinical hours, events, orientations, etc.

Activity Effective Date through \_\_\_\_\_ completion of the program.

Activity locations are Various Virtual & Physical.

In consideration for being allowed to participate in this Activity on behalf of myself and my next of kin, heirs, and representatives, I release from all liability and promise not to sue the State of California, the Trustees of The California State University, California State University, Fullerton and their employees, officers, directors, volunteers and agents (collectively "University") from any and all claims, including claims of the university's negligence, resulting in any physical or psychological injury (including paralysis and death), illness, damages, or economic or emotional loss I may suffer because of my participation in this Activity, including travel to, from and during the Activity.

I am voluntarily participating in this Activity. I am aware of the risks associated with traveling to/from and participating in this Activity, which include but are not limited to physical or psychological injury, pain, suffering, illness, disfigurement, temporary or permanent disability (including paralysis), economic or emotional loss, and/or death. I understand that these injuries or outcomes may arise from my own or other's actions, inaction, or negligence, conditions related to travel, or the condition of the Activity location(s). Nonetheless, I assume all related risks, both known or unknown to me, of my participation in this Activity, including travel to, from, and during the Activity.

I agree to hold the university harmless from any and all claims, including attorney's fees or damage to my personal property, that may occur due to my participation in this Activity, including travel to, from, and during the Activity. I agree to reimburse the university if the university incurs any of these expenses. If I need medical treatment, I agree to be financially responsible for any costs incurred due to such treatment. I am aware and understand that I should carry my own health insurance.

I am 18 years or older. I understand the legal consequences of signing this document, including (a) releasing the university from all liability, (b) promising not to sue the university, (c) assuming all risks of participating in this Activity, including travel to, from, and during the Activity.

I understand this document is written as broadly and inclusively as legally permitted by the State of California. I agree that if any portion is held invalid or unenforceable, I will continue to be bound by the remaining terms.

I have read this document, and I am signing it freely. No other representations concerning the legal effect of this document have been made to me.

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ CWID# \_\_\_\_\_
Participant Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON P.O. Box 6868, Fullerton, CA 92834-6868
The California State University: Bakersfield • Channel Islands • Chico • East Bay • Dominguez Hills • Fresno • Fullerton • Humboldt • Long Beach • Los Angeles • Maritime Academy • Monterey Bay • Northridge • Pomona • Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego • San Francisco • San Jose • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus

# Handbook Review Form

After you review the handbook, please sign below. I have read and agree to the program requirements outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook.

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Printed Name

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Date

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Signature

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Telephone or email address

*College of Education  
Admission to Teacher Education  
657-278-3352*

Date, Year

Student's Name

CWID

Address

Dear XXX:

Congratulations! On behalf of the College of Education and the Department of Graduate Studies Program, we are pleased to notify you that your admission packet for the Master of Science in Special Education has been approved. Your grade point average meets university and department standards, and you have been recommended for admission for the **XXXX** semester with conditional classified standing.

You **must** complete preliminary credentials to enroll in any Master's courses, but if you're a master's only applicant, you can take the master's courses with Dr. Jung's guidance. (He develops your study plan in SPED 501).

The Department of Special Education looks forward to meeting and working with you as you pursue your goals. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Adrian Jung at [ajung@fullerton.edu](mailto:ajung@fullerton.edu) for all questions regarding the Master's degree program.

If you cannot attend the university for any reason during the semester for which you are admitted, please contact our admissions office and notify the university.

Wishing you success in all of your academic endeavors.

Sincere regards,

Adrian Jung, Ph.D.  
Graduate Program Coordinator  
Department of Special Education

***I accept my admission to the master's program in special education.***

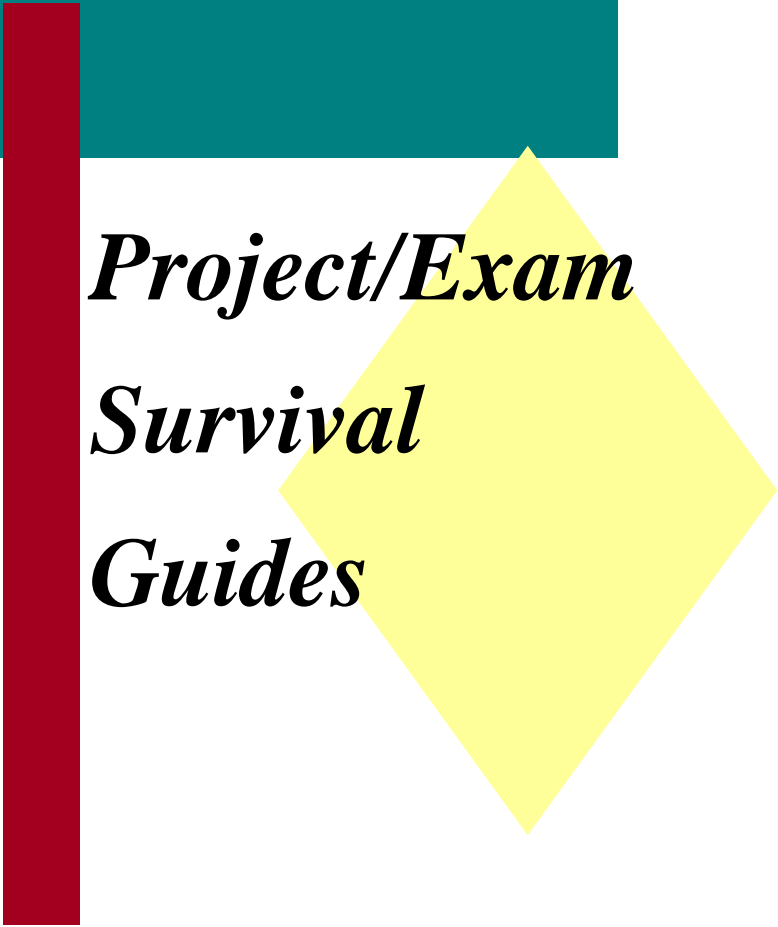
**Print Name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**



VIII



*Project/Exam  
Survival  
Guides*

## Surviving Your Master's Comprehensive Exam/Project

How do you find your way to graduation on schedule?



Special Education Department  
05/01//2024 7<sup>nd</sup> Edition

The master's project is one of the culminating activities of your degree program. It demonstrates two major points: 1) that you can manage the complex process of developing the project and that you are able to use research and writing skills necessary to make you worthy of being a Master of Education, and 2) that you are a master of a specific area of content in Special Education. **The process of developing your master's project spans the entire time you are in the degree program.**

It is important that you spread the work on your master's project over the entire time you are in the Special Education master's degree program. To program you for success, it is highly recommended that you follow the steps presented in this survival guide in order to prevent feeling stressed and overwhelmed later in the program. Managing the work for your project is similar to the management necessary to be an effective special education teacher. Your project is a "long-term homework assignment" that is not attached to a specific course. Whether or not you attain your MS degree is solely your responsibility. **It is your responsibility as a graduate student to use initiative and self-management to complete the project prior to the end of your program.**

This survival guide is designed to be a "Map for Producing Your Master's project." Our hope is that it will help you avoid getting bogged down and falling behind. Our goal, that we hope you share, is that you graduate in a timely manner. If events in your personal or work life make it difficult for you to stay on schedule you should discuss your situation with your thesis/project committee chair and master's advisor **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

This survival guide is also designed so that you will not skip over any of the critical steps in the process of developing your project or important dates and deadlines. **Please bring this survival guide with you to ALL appointments with your project committee chair.**

One's ability to communicate in writing in a clear and organized manner is crucial to completing the thesis or project. It is important to remember that the project process is just that a process. **You will be writing, rewriting, writing, rewriting, and writing even more. You should expect that you will write and rewrite sentences, paragraphs, whole sections of chapters, and chapters many, many times.** The quality of your writing and analysis is always more important than the quantity of the pages so just having the target number of pages is not the primary consideration—it is the starting point. How you communicate in writing should be of high priority. The quality of your research, your research findings and anything else related to your research study has no significance if you fail to write well enough to communicate this information.

Please keep in mind that you need to turn in a **full/complete** draft of your project for faculty review **well** before the end of the semester in which you intend to graduate. Important dates and deadlines are posted on the graduate school website ([www.fullerton.edu/graduate/](http://www.fullerton.edu/graduate/)) and the Department of

Special Education website ([ed.fullerton.edu/sped/](http://ed.fullerton.edu/sped/)). **It is your responsibility to check the websites for the most current information.**

*Courses and Timeline*

The course sequence below is designed to help you see the “big picture,” that is, the courses in which you will learn specific skills related to conducting your research. Many students have not solidified what they want to examine during semester 1, and thus, each student’s completion timeline will vary from this example to some degree.

**GETTING STARTED WORKSHEET**

**Most students will begin working on their project during their respective Advanced Seminar courses (Sped 510 and 586).**

This step of the process focuses on selecting a primary focus to research, organizing your reference materials, and learning about the APA writing format.

**1. YOUR INTERESTS**

Since you have been working in special education, you have identified issues or problems that interest you. You may talk in the faculty lunchroom or with colleagues about these issues or problems. Working on a thesis/project takes a good deal of effort and concentration, so it is wise to focus on an issue or problem that will hold your interest—one that you care about! List the issues or problems that might interest you.

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**2. NARROWING DOWN YOUR CHOICES**

The process of finally selecting the specific research question can be illustrated by thinking of a funnel. They are wide at the top and narrow at the bottom. You are now circling over the top of the funnel with a list of ideas. You need to focus on one idea or a closely related group of similar ideas, problems, or issues. Keep in mind that it is possible to switch topics further into the process; however, unless the topic is closely related to the one you originally selected, you will have to start over at the beginning of the process.

a. OF THE ISSUES OR PROBLEMS YOU PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED, LIST THOSE IN WHICH YOU ARE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE.

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b. OF THE ISSUES OR PROBLEMS YOU PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED, LIST THOSE IN WHICH YOU ARE LIKELY TO GET THE MOST ASSISTANCE.

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c. OF THE ISSUES OR PROBLEMS YOU PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED, LIST THOSE THAT ARE MOST LIKELY TO MOTIVATE YOU TO PERSIST WHEN YOU HAVE TO WORK ON IT LATE AT NIGHT, ON WEEKENDS, AND DURING WINTER/SPRING/ AND SUMMER BREAK?

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d. OF THE ISSUES OR PROBLEMS YOU PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED, LIST OTHER AREAS THAT MAY OVERLAP WITH THE ISSUES OR PROBLEMS YOU IDENTIFIED.

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**3. FIND YOUR PRIMARY FOCUS!**



During the semester in which you take Sped 586, you need to have selected a topic that will be the primary focus of your research for the thesis/project. However, to choose a suitable topic, you need to READ, READ, READ!!! To make an informed decision regarding your topic, you need to know what has already been attempted, what was successful and unsuccessful, or what has not yet been attempted. At this point, the topic you choose will still be broader than your final research question, but knowing the literature will allow you to choose a sufficiently narrow topic to move on to the next step. For example, “Learning Disabilities” is far too broad. “Early literacy among students with Learning Disabilities” is narrower but still too broad. “The effect of phonemic awareness instruction on primary students with learning disabilities” is better. At this point you are now moving into the top of the funnel and beginning to narrow down a specific topic so that you can later develop a research question.

MY PRELIMINARY TOPIC IS:

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(Yes, it has to fit on these two lines, or you are being too wordy!)

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#### 4. DEVELOP A LIST OF REFERENCES ON YOUR TOPIC

You must develop a list of sources of information on your topic. We prefer that you have a more robust or healthy list of 20 or more sources. These may combine journals, books, websites, and reports. However, 95% of your sources should be empirical research studies. Twenty to thirty sources is a good start. From there, you will find out what you need and don’t need and how to better narrow your searches when you look for future sources.

TYPE OF SOURCE	Sources
Journals: Empirical Studies	Most Preferred
Journals: Practitioner Based and Books	Preferred
Web Sites, Interviews, Electronic Media & Reports	Least Preferred

#### Library Resources

Use the web. To answer this question, you will need to search the OPAC online card catalog for the Pollak Library, which can be found at this web address: <http://library.fullerton.edu/>. Other databases, such as ERIC AND PsychInfo.

Get a Titan Card. If you have not done so already, you need to get a Titan Card (PLS-140, 278-3555) so that you can check out the material. You should also seriously consider purchasing Titan Access,

an Internet service provided by the University for a minimal monthly cost. Any full-text items on the many library databases are available from your home computer if you subscribe to Titan Access. If you want to work from home doing research, this is a very valuable tool. Go to <http://access.fullerton.edu> for information about Titan Access.

Library Survival Skill. The Library offers Library Survival Skills sessions that will be very helpful in learning how to use many of the electronic resources it offers. Information on sessions for beginners can be found at: <http://www.library.fullerton.edu/Services/ShowTopic.asp?TopicID=81>.

Research Assistance. The library also offers research assistance on or off campus (via phone or online). Information regarding research assistance can be found at: <http://www.library.fullerton.edu/Services/ShowTopic.asp?TopicID=82>.

As a graduate student, you may schedule a one-hour individual appointment with library research faculty to receive assistance in finding relevant resources. It is highly recommended that you take advantage of this resource if you have weak research skills or are having difficulty finding sources on your topic.

Keeping track of the information. Most students find that making photocopies of the resource materials they plan to use is most helpful because you can make notes directly on the material and you can sort it into categories. Ensure you note all the reference information necessary for a complete APA citation. Finding this information later, just before you need to turn in your work, is difficult and risky.

**Submit your list of references and initial sources you have collected to your committee chair.**

Date turned in \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Given to Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

## **5. DEVELOP A TIMELINE**

You and your chair should establish a timeline for finishing your project. A timeline is not set in stone and can be adjusted as needed. However, having direction and a goal is helpful when working on such a large and lengthy task.

## **6. GETTING STARTED WORKSHEET**

Complete the Getting Started Worksheet (Appendix B) and place it in front of your Survival Guide notebook.

## **7. MEETINGS WITH YOUR COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Keep a record of all meetings with your committee chair. (Appendix C).

## **8. GRADUATE STUDENT CHECKLIST**

Use the Graduate Student Checklist (Appendix D) and Checklists for Chapters (Appendix E) to help you confirm that you have completed all the necessary paperwork required for graduation and covered all necessary content required for your thesis/project.

## 1. MORE NARROWING OF YOUR TOPIC

Now that you have completed your preliminary reference list, you should have a clearer idea about the scope of the topic you picked and which part of the research available in the literature is most interesting and useful. This step requires that you move down the funnel and sharpen the focus of your topic.

Broad Primary Focus:

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Narrowed Primary Focus:

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## 2. ORGANIZING WHAT YOU KNOW

One of the most difficult aspects of the thesis/project writing process for students is that they try to rush past critical steps. One of the most critical is organizing what you have learned from the literature. You need to create a scheme for organizing all notes and their sources related to your topic.

Now that you are beginning to learn more about this topic, how would you describe all you have learned to a colleague and be sure you covered all the important points? You cannot simply say, "This book said.... and that article was about..." The most traditional way to begin to organize your thoughts is to use an outline. Some experts suggest developing a concept map or flow chart to visually illustrate the major categories of your topic.

To organize your information, start by defining a few main categories. Are there stages that your topic has passed through? Then, you could use a historical approach by period or decade. Are there differing points of view? Then, label each one as a main heading. Suppose you were exploring the topic of positive behavior support and students with ADHD. Your headings might be characteristics of students with ADHD, effective behavioral strategies, and pharmacological treatments. You should pick the organizational pattern that best supports your research question(s). You may attach a copy of a graphic organizer, etc., in place of the list below to present to your chair when you discuss your topic.

YOUR MAIN CATEGORIES

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Discuss these main categories with your committee chair. Make sure that you have good coverage of your topic. This is like laying the foundation for a house (your thesis/project). You want the foundation (your key points) to be broad enough for the house to rest on, but you don't want excess foundation spreading out beyond the house, which happens when you write about too many tangential issues.

The first critical gate to completing your project is demonstrating that you can find information about your topic.

### **3. MAKE A DRAFT OUTLINE OF WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM YOUR SOURCES SO FAR**

Make a traditional outline with your main categories using the Roman numbered items (I. II. III. IV. etc.). You will find that most good word-processing programs have an outline function that makes it very easy to create outlines. Fill in supporting information under each main idea. At this point, you may find that you have an important main category for which your supporting information is skimpy—no problem, now is the time to find out! You simply need to do more library research on this aspect of your topic.

This is a **DRAFT** outline because you will be changing and improving it as you write your thesis/project.

**Submit your outline to your committee chair according to the schedule you and your chair have established.**

Date turned in \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Given to Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

### **4. APA Format Required**

#### **APA Format Required**

The department requires that you use the citation system of the American Psychological Association, generally referred to as "APA." We use APA because it is used in most educational writing. The citation system sets the rules for formatting both citations to works in the body of your writing and in the references list at the end. The purpose of a citation system is to give the critical information

necessary so that anyone can find the sources you have used. All require information such as the author's name, year published, publisher, city where published, etc. The advantage of APA is that it is very easy to incorporate citations in the body of your writing. You just have to put the author's last name and year published (if you are quoting—add the page number too). For example, (Anderson, 2002, p. 19). Regardless of what citation system is used, credit must be given to those whose content/ideas have been used, and APA format is the accepted format for the field of Education.

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> Edition) is available from the Titan Bookstore or any of the online booksellers (ISBN 1557988102) and is a required text for many of your SPED classes. Also published by APA is *Mastering APA Style: Instructor's Resource Guide* by Gelfand and Walker. It is designed as a self-paced, self-teaching workbook that can be used to learn APA style (ISBN 1557980845). You may also want to explore how to format your text and references in APA using the Format Ease program ([www.formatease.com](http://www.formatease.com), ISBN 1572304634, phone 212-431-9800). For help with electronic reference formats recommended by APA, go to <http://www.apastyle.org/electref.html>. If you choose to use automatic formatting programs such as Format Ease, you must make sure you know the correct APA format so that you can identify APA errors in your manuscript.

## Headings and Subheadings

Headings and subheadings are key to helping your reader. They divide your writing at logical points and help the reader understand the content to be covered. For the primary header, you must use the format Graduate Studies requires (see Graduate Thesis Regulations Student Handbook).

Subheadings, however, should follow the correct APA format.

Using APA heading format ensures consistent appearance, allowing readers to easily determine the relationships between headings and subheadings. Be sure to consult your APA manual for correct subheading formats.

Some tips about using headings:

- Headings are generally used to indicate the organization of the text. Topics of equal importance should have the same heading level.
- Just as in outlining, there should always be at least two headings at each level
- Do not label headings with numbers or letters.
- For multi-chapter documents, apply heading styles consistently. Determine the heading structure based on the chapter that uses the deepest level heading, and then apply that structure to each chapter.

You must use subheadings to define the major categories of information presented in the literature review. You should begin defining these categories using the outline you developed earlier. Be sure that you follow the APA guidelines for your subheadings.

## Citations and References

An important aspect of using APA format is to ensure that every time you use information from a source in the literature or when you quote material directly, you create an “in-text” citation. You also

need to create an entry in the reference list at the end of the thesis/project for each source you cite in the body of the thesis/project. You must follow the standard APA format.

As you are drafting your project (especially Chapter Two, which will have the most significant number of references), it is a good idea to build the reference list at the same time. Each time you put a citation in the body of your project, take a few moments to create the entry in the reference list for the source. By building the reference list at the same time as the text is written, you avoid the problem of having a citation in the text without a listing in the references.

The reference list contains only listings for those sources that are actually cited in the text of the thesis/project. It is not a bibliography because you are not listing every source you read.

**Faculty will stop reading your draft if they encounter any inconsistency between text citations and the reference list or if the APA format is consistently incorrect.**

Before you turn in any draft, you need to go through it and check to see that there is a reference listing for every citation in the body of the work. Also, check to see that only those sources cited in the text are listed in the references. Ensure that the spelling of the authors' names and the years of publication are the same in the reference list and the in-text citation(s) and that the correct APA format is followed. Hint: it helps to get someone to assist you in this process.

## **5. TIPS FOR FORMATTING YOUR DOCUMENT**

### **Computer**

Before you start drafting any project parts, you must set up the document in your word processing program. Follow the guidelines established in the Graduate Thesis Regulations Student Handbook (GTRSH, <http://www.fullerton.edu/graduate/forms.htm>). You may find it difficult to change margins and page numbering once you have written a good amount—**do it now!** You also need to set up a separate computer folder or file where you will save the chapters of your thesis/project. Purchase high-quality disks/CDs to back up your data. Make at least 2 other back-ups of your thesis/project. Keep the backups somewhere safe (this does not include your chair's office).

Yes, you need to format your own project. Working with a “typist” is not advised. They are expensive—better to invest in the hardware and software you need. They also take up more time making revisions than you will have. We also expect that you will do the work of inputting your writing yourself. This will improve your keyboarding and computer skills. This is your thesis/project, not your “significant other's” part-time job!

You can start creating and formatting a Table of Contents using the guidelines established by the graduate school. The Table of Contents allows the reader to quickly determine the scope and content of a thesis/project. Be sure that you follow **exactly** the sequence of the parts as laid out in the example of a Table of Contents when you write your thesis/project. The GTRSH provides specific instructions regarding how to format your thesis/project.

## **6. TIPS ON WRITING**

### **Writing**

We cannot stress too strongly how important it is that you turn in high-quality writing. Faculty members do not have the time, nor should they be correcting simple grammatical errors such as run-on sentences, misspellings, and mistakes using APA format and style. See the 10 Commandments in the (Appendix F). Your chair is responsible for assisting you with the content and organization of your writing. You or your editing buddies should be catching the other mistakes.

**For most successful writers, editing consumes more time than writing. Take editing your work seriously. It will make a tremendous difference.**

If you know that your writing is weak, GET HELP! Contact the Writing Assistance Center on campus (MH-45) 657-278-3650, or throw yourself into the mercy of someone who will proofread your paper.

We understand that writing is not always a strong skill among graduate students. However, clear writing is a critical skill for professional educators, and you are expected to enter the program with sufficient writing skills to do graduate work.

Clear, graduate-level writing is the second critical gate to getting your project done (the first gate was demonstrating that you could find information about your topic). The writing style for the thesis/project should be sophisticated enough to do the topic justice but not so dense that the reader needs a post-graduate course to “wade” through it. Do not use a style that is too colloquial (informal or conversational/chatty), such as the use of contractions (e.g., don’t). On the other hand, you should also avoid using words or styles that are ornate or overly elaborate (consult your APA manual regarding parsimony).

### “Data”

The word “data” is frequently used in writing theses/projects. Often it is used with the wrong verb. **This word is always plural**, so the correct verb to use is “are” or “were,” not “is” or “was.” For example: *Data were collected. Data are analyzed by....*

### Gender Pronouns

The APA Manual warns against the use of sexist bias when always using the pronouns of a single gender to refer to individuals who are of both genders. You can solve this problem by making the subject of the sentence plural and using “they” or “their.” A less attractive alternative is to use “s/he,” “she/he,” or “his/her,” or alternate between the genders.

### Past tense

You will have your project bound in book form when it is completed. When you read a book about events that have already occurred, it is written in the past tense because the events are in the past. In the same way, you will write your thesis/project in the past tense even though you may be carrying out some of the steps/procedures/methods as you are writing about them. Instead of saying, “*I am going to select a random sample,*” you should say, “*A random sample was selected.*”

### Third person

In most academic writing, the use of first-person pronouns such as “I” or “me” is avoided. Instead of “*I examined the appropriate way to conduct an interview,*” you should write, “*Research was conducted to ascertain the ideal methods used in conducting interviews.*” Using “I” or “me” a limited number of times when it makes the meaning clear and the writing less complex is acceptable.

### **Affect-Effect**

The misuse of affect and effect words is rampant among students. Many students don't know which of the two words should be used in a particular context. The following chart provides information regarding the appropriate use of effect and effect.

<b>HOW IT IS USED</b>	<b>PART OF SPEECH</b>	<b>CORRECT WORD</b>
<i>A feeling</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>affect</i>
<i>A result or influence</i>	<i>noun</i>	<i>effect</i>
<i>To influence</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>affect</i>
<i>To bring about</i>	<i>verb</i>	<i>effect</i>

### **Quotes**

Whenever you use the exact words written by one of your sources, you must identify the words with appropriate quotation marks and a citation containing the page number(s). **Review the page on Academic Dishonesty from the University Catalog** (Appendix G). You are responsible for understanding and following the University policy on academic dishonesty. If you are unsure how these policies impact your work, contact your thesis/project committee chair for advice. Failure on your part to understand and follow these policies may result in your removal from the master's program as well as sanctions provided by the University.

Be sure to review the Student Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism prepared by the Associate Dean of Judicial Affairs, that can be found at:

**[http://fdc.fullerton.edu/learning/Academic%20Integrity/student\\_guide\\_to\\_avoiding\\_plagia.htm](http://fdc.fullerton.edu/learning/Academic%20Integrity/student_guide_to_avoiding_plagia.htm)**

Selecting particularly important quotations to include in your thesis/project is appropriate. However, the bulk of your thesis/project cannot be done by combining quotations from various sources. Double quotations should set off quotations of 40 or fewer words. You will notice that when quotation marks are used, the citation is placed inside the period, but when a longer block quotation (40+ words), it is placed outside the period (Nobody knows why, it is just that way!). Check your APA manual for explicit instructions regarding citing quotations.

## **7. NOW YOU CAN START TO DRAFT YOUR THESIS/PROJECT!**

Keep in mind that what you are starting to do is write a draft that will go through **many, many** revisions.

Please note that even though the abstract comes first in your thesis/project—it is the **last** part you will write. **Do not** try to do it now!

After you turn in a draft of a chapter to your committee chair, keep working on the next chapter. Do not take breaks—keep a steady pace of continuous work on your thesis/project. **You may want to set aside a specific weekly time to work on your thesis/project.**



## Introduction

An introduction aims to describe the problem area, establish its importance, and indicate the author's perspectives on the problem. Introductions usually conclude with an explicit statement of the research hypothesis, purposes, or questions to be answered in the study.

Before introducing the purpose of your project, a brief overview or introduction should be presented. The purpose of this overview is to prepare the reader for the statement of the problem. The content of this introduction could include a current problem that motivated you to work on the thesis/project or a very short historical account of your topic. The rationale, purpose, and assumptions should be embedded into the narrative. **There should be no special subheadings** for these parts of the introduction.

### *Rationale*

You need to discuss how the problem you are posing is related to theories, practice, and/or policy. Explain why the research you plan to do is important, how relevant it is, or why the problem is significant. You can give a brief history of the topic or problem in the traditional way by going from the past to the present or the reverse, by going from the present to the past. You must also present reasons why this study will contribute to the profession. Be sure to include the citations of your sources in this chapter.

### *Statement of Purpose*

The introduction should include a clear, sharply focused statement of the problem (not the solution), namely, an explanation of why you think your chosen topic is important. To write this statement, you must know enough about the literature and research in this area to be able to relate your problem to the rest of the field. You should be able to complete the following sentence: "The purpose of this project was...." No more than two sentences should follow this statement for purposes of elaboration.

### *Assumptions*

Assumptions are premises that you start with before working on your topic or problem. For example, if you are using SAT9 results, you are assuming that the test is an adequate measure of what students know. It is important to present your assumptions at the beginning of your document to provide a lens through which the remainder of the document can be viewed.

## Review of the literature

During the time you are taking Sped 586 you will begin the research for your Review of the Literature (Chapter Two in your project) and write a mini literature synthesis that will be expanded to a comprehensive literature review later. It is often **the most difficult and time consuming chapter** to write because it involves examination and synthesis of all relevant literature related to your topic.

### *Purposes of Chapter Two*

First, it provides the reader with the background information necessary to understand and appreciate the work that you propose; Second, it convinces the reader that your work will contribute to the field because it is appropriate and necessary; and third, it convinces the reader that you are a knowledgeable professional whose work is to be respected because you have background knowledge about the field necessary to contribute to it.

The chapter should begin with a general overview/introductory paragraph. An introductory paragraph eases the reader into the material you will present. Remember that you cannot begin the chapter with another major heading until you have presented some information, i.e., you cannot have a heading followed by another heading or sub-heading without text in between the two. You also need at least two areas for each heading or sub-heading, or the headings and sub-headings are unnecessary. Your review should include bridges between ideas, statements related to the major topic, and summaries at the end of the discussion.

At this point, you have searched the literature, and you should have an indication of what has and has not been examined and what questions/hypotheses have and have not been asked or addressed, respectively. This chapter is where you list the questions that you will be addressing. They should be a **natural outgrowth** of the literature you have examined. These questions/hypotheses are critical components that represent the essence of your topic and drive your research study. They are so important that without investigating them, your study will be incomplete.

What you glean from your literature review should also help you substantiate the rationale and define the purpose of your study. Furthermore, this information will help you to formulate questions regarding your topic that remain unanswered, and develop hypotheses/predictions about your results.

Providing sound self-direction and management of the project development process is the third critical gate in the thesis/project process. (The other gates were: demonstrating that you could find information about your topic and ability to write clearly at the graduate level).

### *What a literature review is NOT*

It is NOT a series of paragraphs summarizing articles or research you found (e.g., annotated bibliography). It is NOT for sharing of YOUR beliefs, experiences, or opinions.

### *What a literature review IS*

It is a thoughtful, well-organized chapter in the thesis/project. Its purpose is to move the reader along a path of understanding the various main ideas of your thesis/project toward the NEED for your study. The reader should be introduced to each main idea of your study and a complete/thorough review of key/all related literature for that element. For example, a study of the relationship between the achievement of students with learning disabilities (LD) and parental involvement in a parent

education program may include the elements of: (a) students with LD, (b) student achievement, (c) parent involvement programs, and (d) parents of students with LD.

You are reviewing the empirical evidence on a specific topic for your reader in a narrative format based on the literature. You must begin at the beginning—by introducing each of the elements of your study to the reader. You **PRESENT** each of the elements of your study, **DISCUSS** how each element has been researched in the past (including conclusions drawn), and **COMMUNICATE HOW** this past research funnels toward your study. In this way, you demonstrate to the reader that you thoroughly understand your topic/area and are “academically qualified” to proceed with a study in this area. Then, and only then, can you guide your reader toward a convincing **ACADEMIC** argument for your study.

### *Content*

*Hypothesis.* By now, you should also have enough information from the literature to establish your hypothesis. A hypothesis represents a prediction of the results of the research findings for quantitative or deductive methods. Hypotheses should be based on sound reasoning, reasonably explain predicted outcomes, clearly state the expected relationships between variables, and be testable within a reasonable time frame. The null hypothesis always takes the position that there is no difference when the treatment variable is manipulated. Here are some examples for you to consider when writing your hypothesis.

### Hypotheses Examples

**#1** Low-achieving 3rd-grade students who have a 5<sup>th</sup>-grade mentor have fewer behavior problems than low-achieving 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who do not.

participants--low-achieving 3<sup>rd</sup> graders;

independent variable--the causal or treatment variable is the presence or absence of a 5th-grade mentor;

dependent variable --the effect or observed outcome on behavior problems.

**Null Hypothesis:** Low-achieving 3rd-grade students who have a 5th-grade mentor will have more or an equal amount of behavior problems as compared to low-achieving 3rd-graders who do not have a 5th-grade mentor.

**#2** There is a negative relationship between peer-group rejection and attitude toward school among 9th-grade students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no relationship or a positive relationship between peer-group rejection and attitude toward school among 9th-grade students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

**#3** There is a direct relationship between teachers' computer literacy and use of computers for educational purposes in the classroom.

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no relationship between teachers' computer literacy and the use of computers for educational purposes in the classroom.

It is important to remember that the researcher does not set out to prove the hypothesis but collects data to establish whether or not the data supports the hypothesis. **Inductive or qualitative research methodologies, including action research, do not begin with a hypothesis.**

#### *Research Questions*

Once you have examined the literature, you should have enough information to lead you to educated and informed research questions (or at least one question). Be careful when drafting research questions. They should be clear and concise, but ensure you do not use confusing terms.

Here are some examples for you to consider when writing your research question:

**What you are examining/measuring in your research should be clearly stated.**

#### **Example of a poorly written question**

*"How much do students grow as a result of this intervention?"*

Does "grown" refer to height? GPA?, Test scores? This question is too vague.

#### **Example of a well-written question**

*"What is the increase in math achievement scores due to this intervention?"*

This question specifically states that math achievement is being measured.

**Your research question should be specific enough to be practical—not global.**

**Example of a poorly written question**

*“Do students with disabilities perform better academically in inclusive classrooms?”*

Which disabilities? Which age group?

**Example of a well-written question**

*“Do middle school students with learning disabilities perform better academically in inclusive classrooms as compared to non-inclusive classrooms?”*

This question specifically states what age and type of students are being examined.

**Do not state conclusions as a research question.**

**Example of a poorly written question**

*“Phonics instruction will improve the reading performance of students with behavioral disorders.”*

This is not a question. It is a statement of what the researcher thinks will happen.

**Example of a well-written question**

*“How does reading instruction in phonics affect the reading performance of students with behavior disorders?”*

This is a question that the research should answer.

**Ways to more sharply focus your research question:**

Focus on a specific program, population, intervention, etc. If you have several questions, make sure they are closely related and focus on the same aspect of a problem. Think of your project as a first step in a series of research efforts—do not try to do it all now. It is much better to do an excellent job on a “small slice” of a big problem than a poor job on a “large slice.” Make sure you can actually carry out the project you are proposing. Is there enough time? Can you get access to collect data? (Appendix H)

*Summary*

Your entire literature review should end with a summary of the information presented throughout the entire chapter, which consists of the main points presented in your review (including citations), conclusions based on the main points presented, the questions/hypotheses that you now have as a result of your review, and identify a need for the material or research that you are to present in the remainder of the project.

## Methodology

You need to spell out all the details of the process and methods you will use to conduct your project. Someone who knows nothing about your study should be able to read your methods and replicate your study. It is as if you gave your friends a recipe for the most delicious cookies in the world. If you leave out one step of the recipe, the cookies will not turn out as they should.

Specifically, you will describe who was in your study, what you did, where the study was conducted, when it was conducted, how you collected your data (remember to write in the past tense), and the specific research method you used. You will need to read enough about the method you used in the research methods literature to be sure that it is appropriate for your work. You must also cite authorities supporting the appropriateness of your methods.

The content of Sped 510 will assist you in determining an appropriate method for conducting your thesis/project research. (See the illustration at the top of the next page). The method chosen is always based on whether or not it is the best choice for addressing your research questions/hypotheses.

### *Choosing a Method*

The type of research method you choose (quantitative vs. qualitative), as well as the research design (e.g., survey, quasi-experimental), depends directly on your research question(s)/hypotheses.

**Warning: NEVER, NEVER CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS UNLESS YOU HAVE** checked with your chair about “**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**” for all theses and some projects. Federal law prohibits people from conducting research that may harm humans. The University has an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application form that you must complete and have approved **PRIOR** to conducting research. You may download the application from the Office of Grants and Contracts at <http://ogcserv.fullerton.edu/>. You are also required (university policy) to take the IRB tutorial and pass it before you can submit your IRB for review. **Your committee chair makes the final decision regarding when to submit your IRB application.**

### *Improving Chapter 3*

When you first drafted Chapter Three (part of the proposal assignment for Sped 510), your primary concern was to create a draft that would become the basis for your final draft. Now it is time to think about polishing up your draft. Ask yourself these questions:

**a. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO ACTUALLY COMPLETE THE STUDY I PLANNED AND GRADUATE ON TIME?** \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no \_\_\_not sure

**b. WILL THE STUDY I PLANNED BE USEFUL?** \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no \_\_\_not sure

**c. DO I WANT TO SPEND THE TIME IT WILL TAKE TO CARRY OUT THIS STUDY?**  
\_\_\_yes \_\_\_no \_\_\_not sure

Unless you answered “yes” to all of these questions, you should consider revising your planned study. You can make revisions without “dumping” your work as long as you stick with the general topics outlined in your research proposal (Sped 510). For example, if you had said that you were

going to survey all of the districts in Orange County on how they provide transition services, you could revise your methodology in a variety of ways: (a) limit the survey to a specific district or grade level, (b) write a case study of how one district provides transition services, or (c) focus your study on the perceived value of such services by families. In all these examples, your literature review on transition services would still be useful, but it might need only minor or no revisions.

If you are considering changing your methodology from that which you outlined in your research proposal (Sped 510), be sure to have your new plan approved by your thesis/project committee chair **prior** to working on further revisions. It is especially important that you obtain IRB approval prior to conducting your research.

*Content for Chapter Three (subheadings are determined by the nature of your study (e.g., quantitative or qualitative) and should be discussed with your chair)*

*Participants/Sample.* This section should include a discussion of the demographic characteristics of the participants involved in the study (e.g., gender, disability, age).

*Setting.* Describe the setting in which the data were collected. This may be the classroom, playground, home, office, etc. A detailed description and analysis of the setting provide the context for understanding the significance of your thesis/project.

*Data Collection Procedures.* Your research question(s) also dictate(s) which data collection methods you choose (e.g., direct observation, survey, archival data).

*Instruments.* Describe the instrument(s) (e.g., achievement tests, social skills tests, surveys) used to collect your data. Why did you select a particular pre-existing instrument? Why did you structure the instrument you designed in a particular way? Why did you choose one instrument over another similar instrument? If you designed your own instrument, did others give input regarding the design? If so, who? Ensure you include information regarding the validity and reliability of each instrument. If you created your own instrument, describe the validation process used. Copies of instruments should be placed in the appendix (es) of your thesis/project.

**NEVER, NEVER USE A SURVEY INSTRUMENT OR OTHER INSTRUMENT UNLESS IT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY YOUR COMMITTEE CHAIR AND IRB (IF APPLICABLE)**  
You may jeopardize your thesis/project if you break this rule. You may have to collect the data all over again. Have your committee chair sign and date his/her approval on a copy of the instrument using the Faculty Approval of Instrument form (Appendix I).

*Variables.* This section describes all significant independent and dependent variables in the study. If you are conducting a qualitative study, this section may not be applicable.

*Procedures.* Include in detail what happened first, second, third, and so on. Describe the whole course of your research from start to finish. If your research requires it, present the hypothesis or hypotheses expressed in null form.

*Design.* Include a description of the plan or design the research will follow. Did you use qualitative or quantitative methods? What research design did you choose (e.g., experimental, survey, quasi-experimental)? Describe the advantages and disadvantages associated with the design(s) you used. You must be able to justify the research method/design you selected by citing authorities on those methods.

The following provides two examples of how your methodological approach and procedures should be described, including citations to the methodological literature.

**Example 1**

In order to create a well-rounded case study, both qualitative and quantitative statistics were utilized. These methods were selected based on the writings of Yin (1984) in his book, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, and Jaeger (1988) in his book, Complementary Methods: For Research in Education. Both writers argue that many sources of evidence are necessary to describe and explain a case study. A Spearman Ranking instrument was developed for quantitative statistics.

**Example 2**

The case study method was used for this thesis/project because of its ability to explain the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for simple surveys. According to Merriam (1988, p. 28), the case study method is used when “description and explanation are sought, when it is not possible to manipulate the potential causes of behavior, and when variables are not easily identified or are too embedded in the phenomenon to be extracted for study.”

*Analysis.* Describe the analysis techniques you selected to analyze your data. You must be able to justify the analyses you selected.



## Results

**While you are taking Sped 597**, you will need to write the results based on the data you collected, which presents your data.

This is where you present the results of the analysis of your data. You may call attention to significant findings but do not make sweeping interpretations, reach conclusions, state opinion(s), or draw implications. **Remember to write in the past tense.** For quantitative studies, the information presented should include the results, the analysis conducted (e.g., ANOVA, T-test), and if findings are statistically significant, indicate at what level.

For qualitative studies, it is critical that sufficient descriptive data be presented in narrative form so that readers can judge the reliability and significance of your conclusions; a “thick description” that includes detail and analysis is absolutely necessary.

When presenting tables, figures, or anything not text-only, **you should consult your APA manual for specific formatting information.**

### *Continuing Your Revisions*

You must continue to review your thesis/project based on feedback from your committee chair. Keep up the pace of your work, stay consistent, and pay attention to your thesis/project regularly. You are responsible for taking charge of and managing the continuing development of your project.

## Discussion

While you are taking Sped 597, you will need to write the discussion.

It includes a brief summary of the thesis/project results, interpretation(s) of the results, implications/conclusions, study limitations, and recommendations for future research. This is where you get to have your “say” about the question or problem. You can present personal interpretations of the data, reach conclusions, and/or draw implications. You are expected to make recommendations related to current practice and future research needed.

### *Content*

*Summary.* Include a brief summary of the results of the study. Connect your findings to the statement of the problem, the rationale, and the literature review.

*Implications/Conclusions.* Implications indicate how your findings can affect teaching, learning, and other aspects of education for persons with disabilities. You should base your implications or conclusions on the findings presented in Chapter Four.

*Limitations.* No study is perfect, and study limitations should be discussed. Limitations are those factors that may affect the results of your study or explain why your results did not support your research question(s) or hypothesis. These may include small sample size, time constraints, low response rates (if you conducted a survey), invalid or unreliable instruments, etc.

*Future Research.* Indicate promising areas for further study that you uncovered in your work on this thesis/project that other scholars may be interested in pursuing, such as expanding the population to include individuals with other disabilities or ethnicities or adding a component to an intervention.

## FRONT MATTER

### *Front Matter*

Now is the time to do your front matter. This includes the title/approval page (the one with all the signatures of your committee members), abstract, and table of contents. Remember that the front matter is numbered using lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). Refer to the GTRSH for all format requirements for “Front Matter.”

### *Abstract*

Now that you have a completed thesis/project, you can write the abstract. The abstract is a summary of the key points in the thesis/project. It must state the problem and/or research question, the key findings, and important conclusions and recommendations. But it must be short—a paragraph (generally 150 words or less). Remember, the abstract paragraph is not indented on the first line.

### *Abstract Format.*

The abstract is the only portion of the front matter that is not explicitly described in the GTRSH. The format guidelines are as follows:

1. The title “abstract” must be in capital letters: ABSTRACT
2. There must be a 2-inch top margin.
3. Text should be double-spaced with the beginning of the paragraph indented.
4. There must be a triple space between the title “abstract” and the first line of the abstract text.
5. The abstract is limited to a maximum of 150 words.

We also recommend that you include an acknowledgments page. This is a great place to thank people such as those who helped, encouraged, or inspired you.

## **FINAL TOUCHES**

During Sped 597, you will work closely with your project committee chair to complete final edits, etc. Your chair is responsible for helping you complete your thesis/project. However, it is your responsibility to format your paper correctly and meet all deadlines. Please consult the GTRSH for all format regulations.

### *Continuing Your Revisions*

You must continue to revise your thesis/project based on feedback from your committee chair.

## FINAL APPROVAL

You must submit your final draft of your thesis to your committee chair **six weeks** prior to the thesis reader due date (check the department graduate program bulletin board or website) for theses and six weeks prior to the due date set by the department. Your committee chair will review your final thesis/project, including **all** of the required parts. If your chair believes your thesis/project is completed, your chair will give copies to your other committee members. Your committee members will review your thesis/project and return the edited document to your chair. Your chair or a committee member will contact you regarding what final edits you may need to make. Any of your committee members may ask you to make revisions before signing the thesis/project approval page. You cannot get your degree until three faculty members have signed your thesis/project approval page and you submit a copy of your approval page and verification that you have had your thesis/project bound. The time before the graduation deadline will be short, so you need to be ready to make any necessary revisions quickly. The completion of your thesis/project should be your **only** priority at this point. See Appendix J for a checklist of this process.

## Submission

**You must submit your final thesis/project with a signed page to your graduate program adviser (Dr. Jung) *electronically* before the last semester is over.**

## The Last Steps

### Final and completed product turned in.

- Submit one complete, unbound, perfect copy of your thesis/project to your chair for final review.

Date turned in \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Given to Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

Final approval to bind (three faculty signatures obtained by) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

- Your thesis to the thesis reader (if applicable)
- A copy of the approval/signature page and a copy of the receipt verifying that you had your thesis/project bound.
- Submit two bound copies of your thesis/project directly to the Special Education Department Graduate Program Advisor.
- Within 4-6 weeks, you will receive a letter from the Special Education Department Graduate Program Advisor stating that you have completed all requirements for obtaining your degree.

Congratulations, you ARE DONE!





## **Sped 597: Project**

**The purpose of Sped 597 is to help you polish up your project, particularly your literature review and Methods, and provide accountability so that you move toward completion while you are taking classes.**

### **CONTINUING YOUR REVISIONS**

You must continue to review and edit the portions of your project that you have already completed. Keep up the pace of your work and pay attention to your thesis/project regularly.

### **EXPAND AND/OR ENHANCE YOUR LITERATURE REVIEW**

Go back and review your literature review and any faculty feedback you received. If you need more information about some aspect of your topic, now is the time to expand and enhance your literature review!

Pick one or two key authors who have written about your topic. They may support your premises, have a unique way of looking at your issue, and do an excellent job of summarizing the research in this field. You probably began researching using a subject index to find these first sources.

#### **Search backward from your existing sources:**

Find the articles that are cited in the reference section of your key article(s). These are the sources used by the author of the key article(s). They provide the basis for the key work(s) that you have selected and can be an important resource in helping you to expand or enhance your literature review by providing more information about the topics you already covered and/or providing you with additional topics that should be discussed.

#### **Search forward from your sources:**

Use the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) to find articles that have referenced the same articles you have identified in other works published as a key since the time the key article(s) was/were written (*Yes, you can do this!*). Your key article(s) will appear in the reference section of the SSCI article(s). This will provide you with the most recent developments on your topic.

SSCI is available in the Library in paper volumes, on one computer that uses CDs, or, more recently, on the Library website. Contact a reference librarian for assistance in locating the index online.

#### **Library Resources:**

If these search steps seem difficult, you may need to take advantage of the training available from Pollak Library. You can also request appointments with a research librarian to assist you by logging on to the library website at <http://www.library.fullerton.edu/ipresearch.htm>. Be specific when you fill out the request so they can provide you with the most effective and efficient assistance possible.

05/01/2024 by Dr. Adrian Jung

**EXPAND AND/OR ENHANCE YOUR OTHER PARTS YOU HAVE WRITTEN**

While you keep the literature review current, you should continue to revise other parts you have written.

You should always be working on something!

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Formal vs. Informal or Action Research  
(Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003)

Topic	Formal Research (required by CSUF) THESIS	Informal Research PROJECT
Method of identifying the problem to be studied	Generated from the review of previous research	Problems or goals currently faced; not generated from previous research
Procedure for literature review	Extensive, using primary sources	Extensive, using primary sources
Sampling approach	Random or representative	Students or clients with whom one works
Research design	Rigorous control for error, internal and external validity	Loose control for error, internal and external validity
Measurement procedures	Focus on statistical or functional significance; present descriptive/inferential statistics, graphs.	Focus on practical significance; present descriptive statistics, graphs.
Application results	Emphasis on generalizability of results; increased knowledge about teaching and learning in general; contribution to theoretical/ applied research literature	Emphasis on practical significance; improved teaching and learning in a particular classroom; contribution to practitioner research literature
Reporting outcome	Published report; journal article; professional conference	Informal sharing with colleagues; brief report; ERIC document; conferences
Who Reads	Across campus	Department Only

Appendix B  
Getting Organized

Department of Special Education  
(714) 278-7769 / Fax (714) 278-3110

### Project Committee Assignment Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Print*

Name		Student ID #
Daytime Phone ( )	Email Address	
Evening Phone ( )		FAX # (if available)

Check all boxes that apply:

- 
- Project
- Proposal form is attached
- Institutional Review Board approval is attached (if required)

Proposed Project Title
_____
_____
_____

Project Chair

Appendix C

**Record of Meetings with Committee Chair**

Date	Submitted/Received	Notes

Appendix D  
**GRADUATE STUDENT CHECKLIST**  
**Department of Special Education**

= Action initiated by the student (as indicated below)     = Action initiated by the University

**1. GRADUATE STANDING: CLASSIFIED**

- Complete any course prerequisites and/or remove deficiencies
- Provide the department with any other supporting statements or materials, as shown in program descriptions in
- Make an appointment with your faculty advisor to develop an official MS study plan to apply for classified standing in Special Education prior to completion of nine units of study plan coursework university catalog
- Take tests if required by the program and order test scores sent to Cal State Fullerton, designating appropriate academic department on the test registration form
- Recommendation for classified standing made by graduate program adviser by sending the signed study plan to the Graduate Studies Office
- Notification of classified standing granted is sent from Graduate Studies along with a copy of the approved study plan
- If notification of classified standing is not received within 6-8 weeks, contact the department graduate program adviser.

**2. COMPLETION OF REQUIREMENTS**

- Apply for graduation prior to the beginning of the final semester. Specific deadlines are listed in the class schedule and posted on the Graduate Studies website. The form is available at the Admissions and Records Service Center and the Graduate Studies Office. A graduation processing and diploma fee of \$90 (\$115 if graduating as of the end of fall semester 2004) will be paid to the university cashier with the application for graduation.
  - Consult the department graduate program adviser to confirm the final requirements for the degree
  - Final, approved study plan, with recommendation, sent by the department graduate program adviser to the Graduate Studies Office
  - A copy of the Grad Check Review Form is sent to the student showing the adviser's recommendation. The Graduate Studies Office staff completed the preliminary audit. The student's study plan is checked for pending grades, and completion of any other requirements.
  - Complete all general and specific requirements, other than final course examinations, by the last day of classes, in order to ensure granting of the degree by the end of the semester
  - Complete written and/or oral examination, if required. Complete thesis or project, if applicable
  - Obtain committee approval for thesis, project, or results of comprehensive exam(s)
  - Submit thesis to committee chair by \_\_\_\_\_ (posted on bulletin board outside the office of the graduate advisor)
  - Submit thesis to university thesis reader by \_\_\_\_\_ (date is posted in the class schedule and on the Graduate Studies website)
- The thesis reader signs "The thesis Approval Form"
- Take a approved copy of the thesis with "the Thesis Approval Form" to the bookstore (Titan Shops Copy Center) and make arrangements for binding, microfilming, and publication of the abstract. The cost is currently \$155 plus \$65 if copyright is desired.
  - Submit project to committee chair by \_\_\_\_\_
  - Deposit an approved copy of the thesis or project in the academic department (if required)
  - Final verification of completion of requirements sent by the Graduate Studies Office staff to the registrar

- ◆ Notification of award of degree received from registrar approximately eight weeks after the end of the semester
- 3. **COMMENCEMENT**
- Make appropriate arrangements for cap, gown, and hood rental in the campus bookstore
- ◆ Commencement information sent by the College Dean's Office

## Appendix E

### Checklists for Chapters

**The following pages are checklists for each chapter. Turn in a copy of the appropriate checklist for each chapter submitted. Faculty members will note the items completed or where additional work is needed on the checklist.**

#### Research Thesis/project

##### CHAPTER ONE CHECKLIST

Use the checklist below to ensure you have included all of the critical parts of the chapter.

- Introduction—a brief overview of the chapter
- States how the problem relates to theories, practice, or policy
- Tells why the research you plan to do is important, relevant to the problem
- Presents reasons why the study will help educators in general and students
- Clear, sharply focused statement of the problem/topic and why it is important
  - Clearly states assumptions—premises you start with before working on your topic

##### CHECKLIST FOR CHAPTER TWO

Use this checklist to ensure you have done well writing your Chapter Two.

- Review comprehensive? The literature emphasizes the findings of previous research.
- Uses the literature to provide the historical context/support for the present study.
- Cites references relevant to the problem under investigation
- Points out trends in the literature.

- Points out gaps in the literature.
- The literature addresses the purpose presented in the Introduction?
- References are analyzed and critiqued, and the results of various studies are compared. and contrasted.
- Review is well organized and educates the reader about the problem or topic.
- Uses direct quotations sparingly.
- Reports sparingly on the details of the literature being cited.
- Indicates questions that will be addressed.
- States hypothesis (ses) clearly (only used when conducting quantitative research)
- Review concludes with a summary and interpretation of the literature and its implications for the problem being investigated.
- References are cited completely and correctly using APA format.
- All citations contained in the text are also contained in the References.
- Written in the past tense.
- Uses subheadings effectively

### **CHECKLIST FOR CHAPTER THREE**

Use this checklist to make sure that you have covered all of the necessary parts of Chapter Three.

- Describes participant selection
- Includes participant demographics
- Describes the measures and instruments used in the study
- Describes how variables were measured
- Describes how was the instrument was designed and steps taken to assure instrument reliability and validity
- Describes strategy for conducting/structuring the study—basic structure of the study
- Describes how the study was carried out from the beginning to end—steps to be followed.



- Operationally defines all variables in the study.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR CHECKLIST**

Use this checklist to make sure that you have covered all of the necessary parts of Chapter Four.

- For quantitative studies: presentation of results of descriptive and inferential analyses, statistical significance if appropriate
- For qualitative studies: presentation of the data presented with sufficient descriptive detail so that the reader can judge reliability and significance of the data, also is there “thick description” which includes analysis of the situation?
- Chapter Four answers the research questions presented in Chapter Two or addresses the problem statement or hypothesis presented in Chapter One.
- May call attention to significant findings, but does not make sweeping interpretations, reach conclusions, state opinions or draw implications.
- Presents a summary statement for the major findings.
- Describes the type of research design used (i.e. Correlation, descriptive, experimental, case study, ethnography, etc.).
- Describes techniques used to analyze/study the data (e.g., t-Test, ANOVA, thematic analysis)
- Describes statistical procedures used (if any).
- Uses subheadings effectively.
- Test statistic for statistical tests and p values when appropriate.
- Written in the past tense.

#### **CHECKLIST FOR CHAPTER FIVE**

Use this checklist to make sure that you have covered all of the necessary parts of Chapter Five.

- Answers the research question or addresses the problem raised in Chapter One

- Gives researcher's conclusions as a result of research conducted
- Notes important implications of the study for current practice
- Notes areas of research that are needed to extend or improve on the current work
- Notes limitations of the study
- Makes recommendations for future research

## Appendix F

### **Ten Commandments For getting three signatures on your project!**

- One faculty member will edit only the content or ideas presented.**
- Two Committee members will stop reading your thesis/project when they discover that you have not followed the guidelines of this department survival guide and the APA Style Manual.**
- Three Committee members will stop reading your thesis/project if they find that you have not made the corrections requested on a previous draft.**
- Four faculty members will stop reading your thesis/project if they find consistent grammar, syntax, or formatting errors.**
- Five Committee members will mark a particular type of problem only once. The student will have to find subsequent errors of the same type and correct them.**
- Six The student will not collect data without approval from his/her committee chair or an approved IRB application.**
- Seven It is the student's responsibility to deliver a high-quality draft to the faculty member at her/his office and make arrangements to pick up the draft when notified.**
- Eight It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all required deadlines and to promptly meet them.**
- Nine For final review, students must turn in *all* of the elements of the thesis/project when submitting a draft for review.**

**Ten Students must arrange for the copying and binding of their thesis/project after it has been signed by three faculty members and give one copy of the approval page to the Special Education Department Graduate Advisor.**

## Appendix G

**Academic Dishonesty** Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism, and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty.

It usually involves an attempt by a student to show possession of a level of knowledge or skill which he or she does not possess.

Cheating is defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent or unauthorized means. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to: using notes or aids or the help of other students on tests and examinations in ways other than those expressly permitted by the instructor, plagiarism as defined below, tampering with the grading procedures, and collaborating with others on any assignment where such collaboration is expressly forbidden by an instructor.

Plagiarism is defined as the act of taking the specific substance of another and offering it as one's own without giving credit to the source. When sources are used, acknowledgment of the original author or source must be made following standard scholarly practice.

The initial responsibility for detecting and dealing with academic dishonesty lies with the instructor concerned. An instructor who believes that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred is obligated to discuss the matter with the student involved. The instructor should possess reasonable evidence, such as documents or personal observation. However, if circumstances prevent consultation with the student, the instructor may take whatever action, subject to student appeal, the instructor deems appropriate.

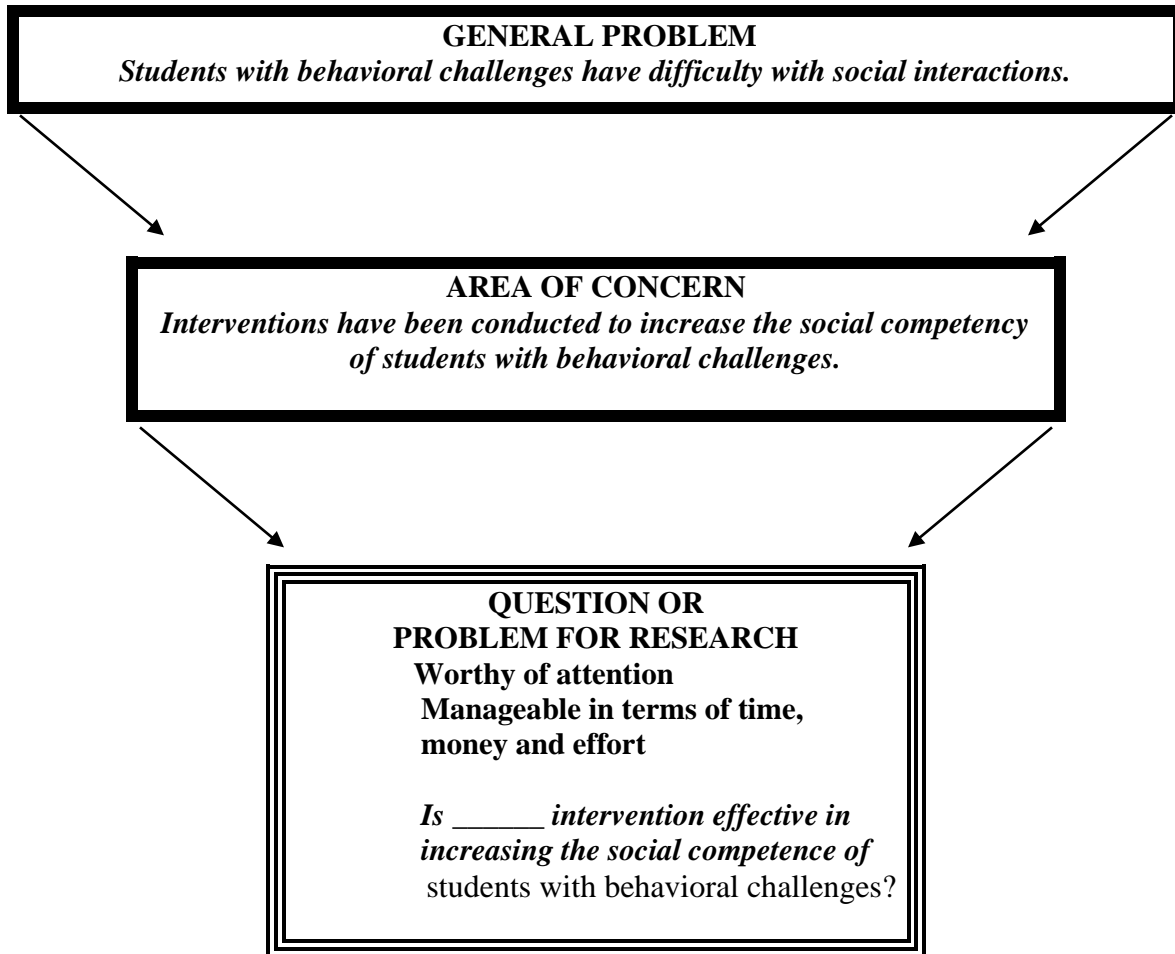
An instructor who is convinced by the evidence that a student is guilty of academic dishonesty shall: 1. Assign an appropriate academic penalty. This may range from an oral reprimand to an F in the course. To the extent that the faculty member considers the academic dishonesty to manifest the student's lack of scholarship and to reflect on the student's academic performance and academic integrity in a course, the student's grade should be adversely affected. Suggested guidelines for appropriate actions are an oral reprimand in cases where there is reasonable doubt that the student knew that his or her action constituted academic dishonesty; an F on the particular paper, project or examination where the act of dishonesty was unpremeditated, or where there were significant mitigating circumstances, or an F in the course where the dishonesty was premeditated or planned.

2. Report to the student involved, to the department chair, and to the vice president for student affairs the alleged incident of academic dishonesty, including relevant documentation, and make recommendations for action that he or she deems appropriate.

The vice president for student affairs shall maintain an academic dishonesty file of all cases of academic dishonesty with the appropriate documentation. Students shall be informed when their names are inserted into the file and provided with copies of any appeals or disciplinary procedures in which they may become involved. The vice president for student affairs or his or her designees may initiate disciplinary proceedings under Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 41301, and Chancellor's Executive Order 148; when two or more incidents involving the same student occur, he or she shall do so. Opportunities for appeal regarding sanctions resulting from disciplinary proceedings are provided by Executive Order 148.

A student may appeal any action taken on a charge of academic dishonesty under the University Policy Statement 300.030, "Academic Appeals." See "Academic Appeals" in the "Student Affairs" section of this catalog.

Appendix H  
**MOVING FROM A GENERAL STATEMENT TO A  
FOCUSED RESEARCH QUESTION**



# Exit toward the comprehensive exam

Special Education 597 is an independent study class designed to help you with your comprehensive exam. Since you have chosen to take the class to continue the work you began on your master's exam, you should have already met with your committee chair regarding what you will need to do to get credit for this class. In most cases, the student collects articles, books, and notes or researches the procedures for the exam. The six exam questions will be distributed to students, and you will complete 6 outlines (6 questions) under your chair's guidance in SPED 595.

**Outlines Assignments:** Meet regularly with your chair and discuss your outlines about the test bank. The test bank will be provided by the Instructor (Dr. Jung) at the beginning of the semester. When you meet with your chair, you need to bring your outlines and demonstrate your work competencies. The chair may assign the specific assignments (questions) in advance.

**Reminder: Independent classes can be tricky and frustrating as you are required to work alone. If you need assistance, you may email or meet the chair whose section/course you are enrolled in at any time. Most students who are working on a comp. exam will meet with their exam chair multiple times during the semester. You and your chair will determine how often you will meet.**

**The exam questions won't be revealed until the exam day.**

## **SPED 595 can be taken only once for credit.**

If the student receives a "C" in the course, then it must be repeated if it is to be used in the Graduate Study Plan. When the course is repeated, the student must earn a letter grade of "A" or "B." The specific examination questions for which the student earned an "A" or a "B" (scores 80-100) will not have to be repeated when taken the second time. There is no provision for taking any portion of the exam more than twice. **On the second examination attempt, students who do not earn an "A" or a "B" on any question that previously earned a "C" shall be terminated from the master's program without the award of a degree.**

You register GS 700 (one unit) for your second exam attempt. You take the exam with 595 students on the date I assign. **There is no summer or intersession of GS 700, so you need to wait till the fall or spring semester for the second exam attempt.**

## **SPED 595 ASSIGNMENTS DESCRIPTIONS**

1. Review all of your course textbooks, articles, lecture notes, class assignments/projects, quizzes, and exams to locate information relevant to your pool of questions. Use your assignments, class projects, and "real life" experiences to provide examples when the question asks for them. Organize your materials to make it easy to find a specific item.
2. Conduct additional research in the library or online. Locate pertinent articles from seminal as well as current researchers. Browse, skim, and read journals relevant to the field.

3. Collaborate with your Chairperson in narrowing the pool of questions from the master list of Comprehensive Exam questions in your specialty area (Early Childhood, Mild/Moderate, or Moderate/Severe).
4. Read each question through several times. Take time to think about it. Identify the parts of the question and what is specifically being asked for.
5. Prepare in-depth outlines and/or essay responses to your pool of mild/moderate, moderate/severe, or early childhood questions.  
- You must complete all 6 questions (outlines) a month before the exam. Three exam questions will be selected by the chair and Dr. Jung and distributed on the exam day.
6. Prepare an annotated bibliography for each of your questions. Collaborate with your Chairperson to ensure that your bibliography reflects seminal and current research in the respective areas. Create a card file or computer file with reference information in APA format. Include the authors' names, date, title, periodical or book, volume, number, pages, place of publication, and publication information. This information cannot be taken into the Comprehensive Exam but will be used as a study tool.

As the culminating activity of your Master's program, you have elected to take the Comprehensive Exam. The Comprehensive Exam assesses multiple skills and abilities, including the following: (1) mastery of content knowledge, (2) ability to integrate knowledge, (3) demonstration of critical thinking/analysis skills, (4) high-level writing competency, and (5) accuracy of documentation.

### **The Formal Examination**

The Comprehensive Exam is an essay exam covering content from your Master's study plan courses. The exam consists of 3 questions and is 4 hours long. The exam will be taken on a computer at the **Fullerton campus (a month before your graduation)**.

### **Exam Questions**

Full-time faculty members from the Department of Special Education developed the current pool of exam questions. You will work with your Master's Chairperson to narrow the current question pool to a core of possible questions (six questions).

### **Responses**

As you prepare/complete your responses, be aware that you are being evaluated on how well you analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the questions. High-level writing skills must be demonstrated as you write thorough and comprehensive responses.

In addition, your responses should reflect a high degree of professionalism. Remember that your answers should cite current research in the field and provide specific classroom-based examples when appropriate.

During the exam, you must cite *a minimum of 5 different and highly relevant references* for each question. We also recommend a minimum of 3-4 pages length per question. You don't need the reference list, but you must memorize the citations (authors and year of publications).

Your essays are to be well constructed with substantial introductory, supporting, and concluding paragraphs. Your answers to each question should be well organized and flow smoothly. Please note that your replies should be written in the third person. You should rarely use "I" or "you" in your answers (Please see attached Rubric for the Comprehensive Exam.).

You're not allowed to use the same topics for your exam (You should select different topics for each question which means you cannot use same responses for questions).

