San Francisco State University | Graduate College of Education

Education Specialist and Master of Arts Degree Program in Moderate/Severe Disabilities

STUDENT HANDBOOK

SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY
Introduction

Dear students,

Welcome to the Moderate/Severe Disabilities Program. This student handbook includes our program’s philosophy, information that we thought would be useful to you, and a description of program policies not addressed in University publications. It is designed as a supplement to the information, forms, and internet links available to you on our Department website.

This is a work in progress, so please let us know if you have suggestions for additions to the handbook.

Sincerely,

Pam Hunt, PhD
Professor and Program Coordinator

Danielle Cowley, PhD
Assistant Professor

Kathy Doering, MA
Instructor and Fieldwork Supervisor

Julie Maier, MA
Instructor and Fieldwork Supervisor
Table of Contents

I. Program Faculty Contact Information

II. Program Philosophy

III. Credential Program Overview

IV. MA Degree Program Overview

V. Useful Internet Links
   a. University Website Links
   b. Other Website Links

VI. Student Conduct Policy
   a. Ethical Principles
   b. Professional Behavior
   c. Behavioral Parameters for Engaging Instructors in Discussion of Course Assignments
   d. Process to Support Candidates at Risk of Failing to Meet Coursework and Fieldwork Competencies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>OFFICE LOCATION</th>
<th>E-MAIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pam Hunt, PhD</td>
<td>HSS 106</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hunt@sfsu.edu">hunt@sfsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Cowley, PhD</td>
<td>HSS 106</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dcowley@sfsu.edu">dcowley@sfsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Doering, MA</td>
<td>HSS 106</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kdoering@sfsu.edu">kdoering@sfsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Maier, MA</td>
<td>HSS 106</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jmaier@sfsu.edu">jmaier@sfsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program Philosophy

The mission of the Moderate/Severe Disabilities Program is to prepare reflective and highly effective educators committed to inclusive philosophies and practices. The following four program elements reflect this commitment.

Element One: Preparing Effective Educators

Our Program prepares special education teachers and clinicians who have the ability to--

- Use student and family-centered assessments to identify high priority, quality of life goal areas for individual students;
- Use targeted quality of life goal areas to anchor and drive the development of IEP goals, in collaboration with students’ families and other educational team members;
- Provide systematic instruction using evidence-based practices to teach academic content and functional skills that address quality of life goal areas;
- Provide opportunities for instruction in contexts that promote the application of knowledge and skills to the students’ everyday lives;
- Develop and support the use of multi-modal AAC systems that allow students to communicate their needs, engage in social interactions, and share information and ideas;
- Implement social supports to facilitate the development of positive social relationships and friendships between students with disabilities and their peers;
- Conduct functional assessments for students who present severe problem behaviors and implement multi-component, positive behavior support plans for the students based on an indepth understanding of why they are engaging in those behaviors;
- Facilitate the development of self-determined behavior and provide opportunities for students to engage in these behaviors; and
- Develop and implement practical and effective systems to monitor student progress on acquiring knowledge and skills targeted by the goals on their IEPs.

Element Two: Facilitating the Achievement of Students’ Valued Life Goals

Our Program prepares special education teachers and clinicians who have the ability to--

- Provide students with access to inclusive school, community, and vocational settings;
- Teach skills that increase students’ independence and self-determined behavior;
- Teach skills and arrange educational and social contexts to facilitate the development of students’ communicative and social competence; and
• Teach academic content knowledge and academic skills that are life enriching, or increase access and independence in current and future environments, or increase students’ ability to become life-long learners.

**Element Three: Establishing and Maintaining General Education Partnerships**

Our Program prepares special education teachers and clinicians who have the ability to--

• Foster meaningful supports, relationships, and friendships between students with and without disabilities;
• Establish collaborative relationships with general education teachers and related service providers and provide support for maintaining effective partnerships;
• Ensure that students with disabilities are provided with access to the general education curricula and classrooms; and
• Provide classroom and school-wide ability awareness training and outreach in order to facilitate an inclusive school community.

**Element Four: Fostering and Supporting Family and Community Connections**

Our Program prepares special education teachers and clinicians who have the ability to--

• Engage in family-centered IEP development;
• Establish effective communication strategies that demonstrate sensitivity to diversity;
• Collaborate with parents, family members, community service agencies, and community members involved in the lives of students; and
• Embed community knowledge into the curricula and teaching practices.
Credential Program Overview

The Education Specialist Credential Program in Moderate/Severe Disabilities prepares highly qualified teachers using research-based curricula and pedagogy and extended, supervised fieldwork experiences to provide quality educational services to students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The set of abilities associated with the four program elements outlined above are addressed through our program’s core methods courses and fieldwork.

The fieldwork sites are inclusive, urban schools in the San Francisco Bay Area that deliver educational services to students with disabilities in general education classrooms, as well as in community and vocational settings for transition programs used as fieldwork sites. All schools used as training sites have programs that meet research-based evaluation criteria for programs serving students with moderate/severe disabilities. Master teachers are highly competent graduates of the credential program in moderate-severe disabilities at SFSU or programs at other universities that share a common educational philosophy, curricula, and pedagogy. University fieldwork supervisors are instructors for program courses and have served as master teachers.

All assignments for core methods courses are developed for and implemented in fieldwork settings with mentoring and evaluation by master teachers and university supervisors. The credential program coursework and fieldwork is listed in the table on the following page.
## Education Specialist Credential
### Preliminary
#### Moderate/Severe Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category 1</strong></th>
<th><strong>Core Requirements</strong></th>
<th><strong>Units</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED 788</td>
<td>Law, Ethics, and Instructional Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 801</td>
<td>Development, Diversity, and English-Language Learners</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 763</td>
<td>Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 747</td>
<td>Physical, Health, and Sensory Disabilities: Implications and Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 791</td>
<td>Nature of Autism Spectrum Disorders</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H ED 630</td>
<td>Elementary School Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(or H Ed 635)</td>
<td>(Secondary School Health)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category 2</strong></th>
<th><strong>General Education Requirements</strong></th>
<th><strong>Units</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E ED 882</td>
<td>Literacy Instruction in K-12 Classrooms</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E ED 784</td>
<td>Curriculum and Instruction in Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category 3</strong></th>
<th><strong>Methods Courses: Moderate/Severe Disabilities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Units</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED 745</td>
<td>Environmental Design for Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 773</td>
<td>Methods of Assessment &amp; Instruction for Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 821</td>
<td>Fieldwork: Moderate/Severe Disabilities ((taken \textit{concurrently with} \text{SPED 745 &amp; 773}))</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 787</td>
<td>Adv. Assessment &amp; Instructional Design for Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 789</td>
<td>Adv. Environmental Design for Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 821</td>
<td>Fieldwork in Moderate/Severe Disabilities ((taken \textit{concurrently with} \text{SPED 787 &amp; 789}))</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category 4</strong></th>
<th><strong>Student Teaching</strong></th>
<th><strong>Units</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED 723</td>
<td>Student Teaching Seminar for M/S &amp; VI</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 730</td>
<td>Student Teaching: Special Education</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Units** 54
**MA Degree Program Overview**

**Master of Arts in Special Education**  
**Emphasis: Moderate/Severe Disabilities**

The Master of Arts program in Moderate/Severe Disabilities facilitates the development of candidates' competency in research and scholarship and provides a comprehensive grounding in evidence-based “best practices” in the education of learners with moderate/severe disabilities. The program coursework and culminating experience options are listed in the table below. Culminating Experience Options I(a) (creative work project) and I(b) (research thesis) are limited to 3 candidates per year. Candidates are selected through an application process. Contact Dr. Cowley to inquire about Option I (a) and Dr. Hunt to inquire about Option I (b).

**Master of Arts Degree Coursework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>UNITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPED 788</td>
<td>Public Policy &amp; Legal Rights of People with Disability</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 801</td>
<td>Diversity in Special Education: Family Systems, Resources, and Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 745</td>
<td>Environmental Design for Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 773</td>
<td>Methods of Assessment &amp; Instruction for Students with M/S Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 821</td>
<td>Fieldwork 1: Concurrent with SPED 745 and SPED 773</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 787</td>
<td>Advanced Assessment &amp; Instructional Design for Students with M/S Dis.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 789</td>
<td>Advanced Environmental Design for Students with M/S Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPED 821</td>
<td>Fieldwork 2: Concurrent with SPED 787 and SPED 789</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISED 797</td>
<td>Seminar in Educational Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CULMINATING EXPERIENCE OPTIONS**

- **Option I(a)** (Limited to three candidates per year)  
  SPED 894  Creative Work Project and Oral Defense  3

- **Option I(b)** (Limited to three candidates per year)  
  SPED 903  Single-Case Research Designs  3  
  SPED 898  Thesis and Oral Defense  3

**Option II** is not available.

**Option III**  
Choice of 2 courses  Elective graduate courses that extend candidates' knowledge of evidence-based practices relevant to the education of students with moderate/severe disabilities  6

**AND**  
Comprehensive written examination
Useful Internet Links

University Website Links

Department of Special Education website: http://www.sfsu.edu/~spedcd/

SPED Department website, “Handbooks and Forms” http://www.sfsu.edu/~spedcd/hndbksfms.html

Credential and Graduate Services Center http://coe.sfsu.edu/cstpc/

Division of Graduate Studies http://www.sfsu.edu/~gradstdy/

Sign-up for MA exam information http://www.sfsu.edu/~spedcd/macomps.html

Other Website Links

TASH http://tash.org

Council for Exceptional Children http://www.cec.sped.org

Association for Positive Behavior Support http://www.cec.sped.org

CAST: Center for Applied Special Technology http://www.cast.org/

California Deaf-Blind Services http://www.cadbs.org/

The Iris Center http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/

LeadScape http://www.niusileadscape.org/

Paula Kluth: Toward Inclusive Classrooms & Communities www.paulakluth.com

Common Core State Standards (ELA/Math) www.corestandards.org

California Standards: Science/Social Studies www.cde.ca.gov/be/st
STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

Ethical Principles

Confidentiality and Person First Language

- Participants in this course must be committed to a code of professional ethics by ensuring confidentiality is protected for all individuals with disabilities and their families. To ensure privacy and respect for these individuals, students are asked to use pseudonyms in reference to all real persons and places in written materials (in paper and digital form) and/or to use only first names in class discussions and presentations.
- Students will limit discussions of students, teachers, and schools to members of the Moderate/Severe program (i.e., discussions should not occur within earshot of the public in places such as elevators, hallways, etc.).
- Students are responsible for obtaining appropriate permission from schools/programs and/or families to share photographs and videotapes of individuals in class. The same practices apply to ensuring the confidentiality of all guest speakers.
- When speaking or writing about persons with disabilities, students are expected to use generally accepted “people first language” (e.g., a person with a disability as opposed to “the disabled” or “handicapped person”; a child with an intellectual disability as opposed to the “retarded” child). Exceptions apply in the case of those individuals/groups who advocate to be referred to in an alternative manner as acknowledgement of their socio-cultural identity, such as individuals in the Deaf or Autistic communities (Wolfberg & Bottema, SPED 791 syllabus, Fall 2009, SFSU).

Classroom Community and Respect for Others

- “The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop an understanding of the community in which they live. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.” (Cited from Course Syllabus Self-Checklist, Department of Counseling and Special Education, CSU, Fresno)
- Students and faculty will maintain a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Students and faculty will treat young students, their families and teachers with respect and dignity both in their presence and in discussions with other members of the faculty and educational team.
• Students and faculty will interact with all members of the program, including young students, families, and classroom teachers in a considerate and cooperative manner.
• Students will judge colleagues fairly and attempt to resolve conflicts in a manner that respects the dignity of every person involved. (Adapted from Student Handbook, Department of Physical Therapy, SFSU)

**Academic Integrity**

• Students are responsible for maintaining appropriate academic conduct according to University policies. Students judged to engage in dishonest practices, including cheating and plagiarism, may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or in the course as well as may be subject to disciplinary action as provided in Title 5, California Code of Regulations. Any student may be expelled, suspended, placed on probation, or given a lesser sanction for discipline problems.
• “Cheating is defined as the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one’s grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term ‘cheating’ not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means.”
• Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. To avoid plagiarism, students must be careful to give credit every time they summarize, paraphrase or quote another’s work. When information or ideas are obtained from an outside source, that source must be cited. Direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks with the source immediately cited. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an “F” grade. All instances of plagiarism may be reported to the Dean of the College, and to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action. (Cited/adapted from SFSU Humanities website) If you would like to review the university’s policy on plagiarism, please refer to http://conduct.sfsu.edu/plagarism.
• A special note about plagiarism and Teachers: Teachers frequently share materials with each other and adapt commercially published materials for their particular teaching contexts. It may be quite appropriate, therefore, for you to use materials that you downloaded from the Internet or obtained from a mentor teacher, faculty member, or peer, particularly for student handouts and/or lesson plans. Nonetheless, you are always expected to cite these sources, including internet sites, on any material that you do not create on your own. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade for the course and appropriate disciplinary action. (Cited from Ferri (2011) SPE 412 Course Syllabus, Syracuse University)
**Professional Behavior**

Students enrolled in the Moderate/Severe Disabilities Program understand and accept the importance of professional behavior; ethical standards; honesty; commitment to learning; good interpersonal communication skills; respect for classmates, faculty, classroom teachers and guest speakers; effective use of time and resources; constructive integration of feedback; problem solving; critical thinking; and stress management. These professional behaviors will be emphasized and expected of all students throughout their graduate studies in the SFSU classroom and local schools. (Adapted from Student Handbook, Physical Therapy Program, SFSU)

Students must meet expectations at the given state of her/his program in the following dispositional areas:

- Demonstrates commitment to understanding diversity
- Demonstrates commitment to enacting the belief that all children can learn and commitment to ensuring their success
- Demonstrates commitment to engaging in personal and professional behaviors that promote self-growth
- Demonstrates commitment to developing interpersonal behaviors that promote and foster collaboration
- Demonstrates professional conduct and ethical behavior suitable to the profession

General professional conduct expected of students include:

- Demonstrates a receptive attitude towards suggestions, feedback and constructive criticism.
- Uses suggestions to make appropriate changes in performance and/or behavior.
- Uses discretion when discussing confidential information.
- Demonstrates flexibility in accommodating to unforeseen conditions or circumstances.
- Offers assistance to others when appropriate.
- Conveys appropriate self-confidence through verbal and nonverbal behavior.
- Recognizes own limitations by asking for guidance and assistance when needed.
- Demonstrates initiative to increase skills and knowledge by using appropriate resources.
- Manages personal affairs in a manner that does not interfere with professional responsibilities.
- Uses appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication skills with others.
- Demonstrates respect, courtesy, and consideration for the rights and dignity of others.
- Maintains a professional appearance and demeanor.
- Manages and prioritizes tasks to meet responsibilities.
- Accepts responsibility for personal mistakes and does not blame others or continually offer excuses. (Cited from Student Handbook, Physical Therapy Program, SFSU)
If the student fails to meet expectations and demonstrates only minimal accomplishment in a given dispositional/behavioral area (as indicated by University and School District classroom observations), substantial further work is needed and must be communicated to the Program Coordinator. If a student displays any unprofessional behaviors, s/he will be at risk of dismissal from the program, independent from grades. The achievement of professionalism is as important as maintaining high academic performance.

Probation

If a student fails to meet professional behavior expectations:

- The Program Coordinator will review the situation.
- The Program Coordinator will schedule a meeting with relevant faculty and fieldwork personnel;
- During the meeting, the behavioral concerns will be discussed and an action plan will be developed to modify targeted inappropriate behaviors and demonstrate honest, sensitive, and professional behaviors typical of a teacher. Immediate and substantial changes in behavior are expected following the meeting.

Declassification

A student may be subject to program declassification if:

- The behavioral concerns addressed during the probation meeting continue.

Behavioral Parameters for Engaging Instructors in Discussion of Course Assignments

Before Submitting an Assignment

1. If clarification is needed beyond the review of the assignment guidelines in class and review of example assignments (when available), candidates can send one to two email messages to the instructor for further clarification. Instructors have 24 hours to respond. Emails will not be answered during the weekends or holidays.

2. If candidates would like to discuss the assignment with the instructor, an appointment can be made to do so during the instructor's advising hours. The meeting will not extend beyond 20 minutes.
**After Receiving a Grade**

1. If candidates do not agree with a grade received on an assignment, the grade will not be discussed with the instructor after class or during break. Instead, an appointment can be made during the instructors’ advising hours. The instructor will review the assignment guidelines, discuss the rationale for the grade received, and offer suggestions for revising the assignment if the grade is a B- or lower. The meeting will not extend beyond 20 minutes.

2. Candidates will have one week beyond the meeting day to submit a revised assignment. Only one revision will be accepted.

3. The final grade will represent an average of the original and revised grades.

**Process to Support Students At Risk of Failing to Meet Coursework or Fieldwork Competencies**

Systematic mentoring procedures for credential candidates at risk of failing coursework or fieldwork competencies will be implemented through a partnership between program faculty, fieldwork supervisors, and master teachers—with coordination with the SFSU Disability Programs Resource Center (DPRC) when relevant. The structure for the mentoring activities will be the following:

a. The Program Coordinator will identify with program faculty and master teachers the candidates who are “at risk” of failing because of their poor performance on course assignments and/or in their fieldwork placements (efforts will be made to identify the students “at risk” during the first semester that they are enrolled in the coursework and fieldwork in moderate/severe disabilities);

b. The Program Coordinator will develop with program faculty and master teachers a list of areas that must be addressed and an Individual Action Plan that includes needed supports and completion dates;

c. The Program Coordinator will meet with the candidate, the Department Chair, program faculty, the master teacher, and DPRC staff (if relevant) to review the Individual Action Plan and completion dates with the candidate; and

d. Program faculty, master teachers, and DPRC staff (if relevant) will continue to provide mentoring and supports (including the supports included on the action plan) until the concerns are resolved.

e. If the candidate continues to fail to meet coursework or fieldwork competencies, he or she will not receive a passing grade for those courses.