

# **Special Education Doctoral Program Handbook**

## **Updated: September 2024**

### *Special Education Program*

**Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education (CHSE)**  
**College of Education**  
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University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742



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## Section 1: Introduction

The Special Education (EDSP) doctoral program resides in the Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education, one of three departments within the College of Education (COE) at the University of Maryland (UMD). Doctoral studies in the Special Education program emphasize research and scholarship, leadership and professional development, and disciplinary knowledge. The EDSP doctoral program is designed to prepare future researchers, leaders, and teachers for positions in higher education institutions.

The university community, the state of Maryland, and the Washington, D.C.

proximity to the United States Congress and governmental agencies, including the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and the American Institutes for Research, among others, provides opportunities for summer

## **Section 2: EDSP Faculty and Research Interests**

Jennifer Amilivia

## Administrative Support Personnel

**Note:** *Our administrative support personnel serve the entire CHSE department and are often inundated with requests from faculty and administrators. Please email or visit them in person when possible before calling. Include your student ID number in all email correspondence.*

Name	Title	Email	Phone	Location	Responsibilities
Ms.					

## Fellowships, Assistantships, and Awards

The Special Education program may offer support for doctoral students in the form of provide information about these opportunities. In addition, the UMD Graduate School posts information about campus wide fellowships, assistantships, and awards. For additional funding opportunities:

Visit the **College of Education Scholarship opportunities** webpage.

Visit the **Graduate School Fellowship and Graduate Assistantship** for additional funding opportunities.

Visit **Policies regarding Graduate Assistantships**.

For information about other student financial aid, review the **Office of the Student Financial Aid**.

## Graduate Student Life and Resources



temporary housing via their web sites.

**Long-Term Housing Options** include two all-graduate student-housing options in close proximity to campus, Graduate Hills and Graduate Gardens. This apartment community is located on university property but is managed by Southern Management Corporation, a private company.

### **Section 3: The Special Education PhD Curriculum**

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree in Special Education prepares researchers, teacher educators, and leaders who will advance the education of children and adults



EDMS 647 Causal Inference and Evaluation Methods  
 EDMS 655 Introduction to Multilevel Modeling  
 EDMS 657 Exploratory Latent and Composite Variable Methods  
 EDMS 722 Structural Modeling  
 EDMS 724 Modern Measurement Theory  
 TLPL 790 Mixed Methods Research in Education  
 TLPL 792 Qualitative Research II: Analysis and Interpretation of Data  
 Other [Determine with Advisor]

### **Pre-Candidacy Research:**

**EDSP898 Pre-Candidacy Research.** Students will enroll in a minimum of 3 credit hours of EDSP 898 with their advisor when working on research projects or activities specifically relating to the comprehensive portfolio (e.g., research papers, the synthesis paper).

### **Electives:**

Select a minimum of three additional courses approved by your advisor. Doctoral students will identify a sequence of courses and experiences to advance their knowledge and experience in an area of specialization. This may include additional supervised teaching experience (EDSP 888 credits), additional research (EDSP 898 credits) or other courses (to be determined with your advisor).

**Supervised College Teaching:** Doctoral candidates take courses to become familiar with college teaching.

**TLTC 798** University Teaching & Learning (1 credit) \*

**EDSP888A** Apprenticeship in Special Education (1 credit) Register for 888A credits when completing supervised college teaching.

Doctoral candidates have the option to engage in a variety of individualized experiences to students will earn the required two credits towards college teaching. Students should engage

on the course, typical responsibilities include weekly meetings with the instructor of record, preparing course materials, holding office hours, teaching 2-3 full sessions with opportunities for formative feedback, and grading assignments.

**Supervised Research or Policy Internship:**

Required experiential learning component for all full-time students, optional for part-time students. Ideally, students will complete an internship during the summer after their first or second year. Internships are available with federal and local research organizations, policy organizations, and national technical assistance centers. For example, internships can be

spring for 6-credits of EDSP 899 (**Post-Candidacy or Continuous Registration**). For instance, if a student passed the portfolio review during the semester and the Graduate School advanced the student to candidacy, the student will be registered automatically for six credits of dissertation research starting the following semester.

**Benchmarks:** Completion of the dissertation must occur within **4 years after advancing to candidacy**.

*Key Steps in the Doctoral Program [for program planning]*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Schedule an initial meeting with your advisor.** Once admitted to the doctoral program, each student is assigned an Advisor. *It is the \_\_\_\_\_ to set up a meeting with their advisor before the start of the first semester to review the program curriculum, program benchmarks and timelines.* During the first meeting, the advisor and student will review the doctoral programs requirements and other information provided in this *Handbook* (use **Table 3.**) Students are responsible for maintaining electronic copies of all forms and updating them with their advisor on at least an annual basis. These forms are to be submitted as part of the Annual Review process and Comprehensive Portfolio Review and used for general advising.

The following steps should guide the advising process:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Plan Coursework** (use **Table 1**): Develop an initial list of courses and

form will be updated and attached to the Annual Review. There are two *examples of sequences* that students may use to plan their doctoral coursework over a four-year period (See **Table 2A** and **2B**).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Complete CITI Training - Human Subjects Review.** All research that involves the use of human subjects requires review and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the initiation of the research. CITI Training is required for all researchers as a condition of IRB approval and should be completed as early as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Complete Internship.** Identify early what organization you are interested in working with to allow time to apply. In the past, students have interned with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and American Institutes for Research (AIR).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Prepare and Submit Annual Reviews** (use **Table 4**): It is important for a student and advisor to plan early for how the student will complete the required research, teaching, and leadership experiences in this program. The items or evidence that must be submitted are part of the required **Doctoral Graduate Outcome Assessment**.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Establish a portfolio review committee** in discussion with your advisor.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Develop and Submit Comprehensive Portfolio:** It is important to identify, develop and finalize the items that are part of the Comprehensive Portfolio Review (see **Table 6**). A positive evaluation of the Comprehensive Portfolio allows the student to





Items are not to be used for more than one category. In addition to the electronic copy of the portfolio, an oral defense is required. Students should complete **Table 7: EDSP Rubric for Portfolio Review** when submitting these materials to the Graduate Committee.

**1. Curriculum Vita (CV).** The student should update their CV with publications, presentations and relevant experiences.

**2. Synthesis Paper.** The synthesis is a formal review of the literature and compilation of its evidence on a particular topic. Unlike a literature review, the synthesis presents a detailed methodology for the review of empirical evidence and results in new information, specifically better understanding of a current practice, a historical analysis, or a meta-analysis of the effects of an intervention or practice. The synthesis paper is expected to be of publishable quality and prepared to meet the gu6(t)7(s )7(i)-66(t)7(t)7(e)-6(r )7(u)-6(









credit hours every semester, excluding summer and winter sessions, until the degree is awarded. A minimum of 12 hours of dissertation credits must be completed (EDSP 899). During the dissertation stage, Waivers of Continuous Registration are only granted under the University's policy for Leave of Absence for Graduate Students for Childbearing, Adoption, Illness, or Dependent Care. All graduate students must register for courses and pay associated tuition and fees each semester, not including summer and winter sessions, until the degree is awarded.

**Dissertation Committee.** Each doctoral candidate and his or her advisor will select members for an Examining Committee. Members must be invited to this committee at least **six weeks before** the student holds an oral exam for the defense. The University has very specific guidelines for membership on the Dissertation Examining Committee and the student should review this information.

Briefly, the Committee must include a minimum of five members of the Graduate Faculty; at least three must be Full Members. The Chair of the Committee will typically be the student's advisor, who will be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty, or who has been granted an exception to the policy by the Dean of the Graduate School. Each Committee will have appointed to it a representative of the Dean of the Graduate School. See the graduate school guidelines

Representative. The Dean's Representative may be one of the five voting members. Alternatively, the Dean's Representative may not be a voting member of the Committee.

-voting, the student must have five other voting

-voting.

**Eligibility.** Eligibility to defend a dissertation occurs when the student, (a) has been advanced to candidacy for at least 6 months, (b) has met all program requirements for a dissertation examination, (c) is in good standing as a graduate student at the University, (d) has registered for at least 12 credits of EDSP 899, (e) has a valid Graduate School-approved Dissertation Examining Committee.

#### **Format.**

the **Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide** available via UMD Graduate School webpage. The Style Guide includes information on formatting the document with Microsoft Word. Download a copy of the Style Guide and consult this document prior to beginning the process.

#### **Dissertation**

The dissertation will consist of five chapters: (1) an introduction, (2) a full research synthesis paper conducted as part of the comprehensive portfolio exam, (3) a full paper on the first empirical study, (4) a full paper on the second empirical study OR a policy or practitioner paper, and (5) a conclusion.

**The introduction** presents the overall theme of the dissertation and includes a) the statement of the problem, (b) a *summary* of the most relevant literature reviewed in the synthesis, (c) a theoretical framework, and (d) an overview of the

three papers to be presented in the dissertation.

**The Synthesis** presents an introduction to the problem addressed in the dissertation, a systematic and critical review of the literature base relevant to the problem, and a discussion including conclusions, limitations, and future directions. This paper may be an expansion of the research completed in EDSP 872 and for the Comprehensive Portfolio Requirements (See **Section 4**). Submission to a journal is expected; acceptance of the article is not required.

**Two Empirical Studies (or one empirical study and one practitioner/policy paper)** could be conducted using data from the same context and sample. However, the studies should address different research questions and use at least some unique data (i.e., some data may be overlapping across studies, but other data should be unique to each study).

**The Empirical Manuscripts** include an introduction, a brief literature review (based largely on the synthesis), a methods section, an analysis and results section, and a discussion (including limitations) and conclusions section.

OR

One Empirical Study and one Policy or Practice paper. Students may substitute a non-empirical manuscript in lieu of a second empirical study. This paper should focus on policy implications of the main empirical work under review or be a paper that disseminates the empirical findings for a practitioner audience. Submission to a journal is expected; acceptance of the article is not required.

**The Conclusion** to the dissertation should provide a general discussion about the contribution of the dissertation to the field as well as possible applications and directions for future research.

**References** must appear at the end of the entire dissertation for the Graduate School. It is recommended that the student provide references at the end of each chapter if the chapters represent manuscripts for submission to journals (or part of the overall project).

### **Example of Dissertation.**

To illustrate a three-paper dissertation process, the following examples are provided:

#### Example 1:

A student conducts a research synthesis on vocabulary intervention for children with disabilities. They then conduct an intervention study comparing two methods of intervention (between subjects) and two text types (within subjects).

1. An introduction about the importance of vocabulary in language and literacy

3. An empirical paper about the effects of two different methods of intervention on the vocabulary learning of students with disabilities (chapter 3)
4. learning (chapter 4)
5. A conclusion tying the papers together and summing up the contribution of the dissertation to the research base (chapter 5).

Example 2:

The student writes a research paper based on intervention research and a

1. An introduction chapter
2. A research synthesis
3. Empirical research (could be qualitative, quantitative (intervention or non-intervention), or mixed-methods study)
4. Practitioner paper
5. Conclusion

The three papers in the dissertation should be of publishable quality. The papers should follow the formatting guidelines of potential publishing outlets. Students should consult journals to which they might consider submitting articles for guidance on tone, length, and format. Identifying potential outlets in the proposal is recommended. Manuscripts do not have to be submitted to these publishing outlets prior to the defense or graduation, but submission of the articles during or shortly after graduation is an expectation.

**Students must be the first author on all papers resulting from the dissertation.**

Multi-authored papers, including papers co-written with advisors, are acceptable but students should clearly outline their unique contribution in their proposal so the committee is clear on what individuals have contributed and can determine whether the individual contribution is acceptable for a dissertation.

A written copy of the proposal must be sent to the Examining Committee at least **10 working days prior to scheduled oral defense** along with **Table 9: EDSP Rubric for Final Defense (Written and Oral Presentation)**.

responsibility to make sure committee members complete all forms and send them to the Director and Coordinator of Graduate Studies in Special Education.



**When in doubt about a form or a specific deadline, contact Ms. Carol Scott, [cscott18@umd.edu](mailto:cscott18@umd.edu), Coordinator of CHSE Graduate Programs.**

The College of Education, Graduate Studies Office provides documentation to the Graduate School that each graduating student has met all graduation requirements. The Graduate School official clearance office and must receive forms in support of graduation from the College of Education. Allow extra time to acquire the necessary signatures, in order to meet deadlines. All required forms are available on-line in a printable format. In order to graduate, students must meet the requirements and adhere to the policies of the admitted program, the department, the College of Education, and the Graduate School, and must meet published deadlines. The College of Education and the department may set regulations and requirements above and beyond Graduate School requirements.

### ***Post-Graduation Assessments***







**Intermediate Quantitative or Qualitative Methods**

Course (choose one):

**EDMS 655** Introduction to Multilevel Modeling

**EDMS 657** Exploratory Latent and Composite  
Variable Methods

**EDMS 722** Structural Modeling

**EDMS 724**

<p><b>Example Elective Area:</b> A student may choose to take additional research methodology courses as electives (variable courses and credits) or other courses based on their content or research interest from within or outside the department and across other Colleges. Students should discuss these courses with their advisor. Additional electives may be taken after the student advances to candidacy, if</p> <p>Additionally, the following EDSP courses can be taken as electives:</p> <p><b>EDSP 798</b> Independent Study <b>EDSP 898</b> Pre-dissertation research</p>		
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**Year 4 = 12 credits**

<b>EDSP 899</b> Dissertation Research	6	<b>EDSP 899</b> Dissertation Research	6
	<b>6</b>		6

*Notes.* Students finish their Comprehensive Portfolio for review by the EDSP Graduate Committee. Upon successful completion, students apply to Advance to Candidacy. Others register for additional credits of EDSP 898 until the Portfolio is complete and reviewed by the Graduate Committee.



	<b>5</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Year 4 12 credits</b>			
<b>EDSP 899</b> Dissertation Research	6	<b>EDSP 899</b> Dissertation Research	6
	<b>6</b>		<b>S</b>

*Notes.* Students finish their Comprehensive Portfolio for review by the EDSP Graduate Committee. Upon successful completion, students apply to Advance to Candidacy. Others register for additional credits of EDSP 898 until the Portfolio is complete and reviewed by the Graduate Committee.

**Table 3: Advising Highlights by Year****Admit****Student-Advisor Responsibilities**

Review Requirements in the *Special Education Program Doctoral Handbook*

Develop Tentative Schedule of Courses

Review College of Education Office of Student Services

Website for Required Forms, Dates

*Sign up for CITI Training: Human Subjects Research Training-IRB*

\*



## **Annual Review- Year 2 (Early Assessment)**

**Research and Scholarship:**

\*Attach completed rubric for the graduate outcomes assessment.

**Synthesis Paper:** Please describe your progress on your research synthesis. Have you chosen a topic? Have you begun your literature search? Have you begun critiquing studies?

### **Leadership and Professional Knowledge**

Please list and describe leadership or professional activities in which you participated during the past year. These might include teaching or internship experiences or service opportunities (e.g., conducting professional development at a school, leadership position in a campus student organization).

### **Self-Assessment**

Please indicate whether you think you have made satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress in each of the three areas above. For areas that you note as unsatisfactory, please develop an action plan for how you will develop in that area over the next year.

## **Annual Review - Years 3 And 4 (Later Assessments)**

### **Research and Scholarship:**

Please list and briefly describe the research and scholarship activities in which you have participated during the past year. Also, please attach your CV highlighting the publications, presentations, and workshops that you have completed or have had in progress during the past year.

Please describe your progress on the empirical studies in your dissertation. Have you completed your proposal? Have you begun collecting data? Have you begun analyzing data? Have you begun writing your first empirical? Have you begun writing your second empirical paper?

### **Disciplinary Knowledge**

Please describe your progress on the synthesis in your dissertation. Have you updated your synthesis since you advanced to candidacy? Have you responded to faculty feedback from your comprehensive portfolio review committee?

### **Leadership and Professional Knowledge**

Please list and describe leadership or professional activities in which you participated during the past year. These might include teaching or internship experiences or service opportunities (e.g., conducting professional development at a school, leadership position in a campus student organization).

### **Self-Assessment**

Please indicate whether you think you have made satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress in each of the three areas above. For areas that you note as unsatisfactory, please develop an action plan for how you will develop in that area over the next year.

## Annual Review Criteria for Advisors

Based on your advisee's annual self-evaluation, please rate your student as showing satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress to degree in each of the graduate outcomes assessment domains. Also, please explain your rating. For any rating of unsatisfactory, please note recommendations for the future.

<b>Graduate Outcomes Assessment Domain</b>	<b>Rating (Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory)</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Research and Scholarship		
Disciplinary Knowledge		
Leadership and Professional Knowledge		
Overall		



Demonstrate an understanding of current educational and disability issues and policies pertaining to children, youth, and

EDSP 860 Doctoral  
Research Seminar

**Early:** Literature Review  
**Year 1**

Satisfactory: Student shows  
promise in terms of



EDSP 899:  
Doctoral  
Dissertation  
Research

**Late:** Rubric:  
Dissertation Final  
Exam  
**Year 4 or 5**

Satisfactory: Student defends dissertQq45 102.02

**Table 6: Comprehensive Portfolio Review Checklist**

Date Submitted to Director of Graduate Studies in Special Education:

*Dear EDSP Graduate Committee:*

*I am submitting my Comprehensive Portfolio with my Advisor Approval. I understand that the EDSP Graduate Committee reviews my Portfolio, which includes my CV and three products/evidence of competence (e.g., published articles, submitted manuscripts, etc.),*

\_\_\_\_\_CV

**Evaluation of Scholarship and Mastery of Academic Discipline**

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Synthesis Paper:

Title

If this is a co-authored published journal article, or article submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal.

Date Submitted or Published:

Name of Journal

2. Choice of one or more from the following (only one is required)

- First or co-authored published journal article, or article submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal.

Date Submitted or Published:

*Title:*

- First or co-authored published chapter, or chapter submitted for publication. Chapters should be published in reputable academic publishing houses or university presses.

Date Submitted or Published:

*Title:*

- First or co-authored policy paper or brief published or submitted for publication.

Date Submitted or Published:

*Title:*

- \_\_\_\_\_-off

Date Submitted or Published:

*Title:*

**Evaluation of Professional Practice**

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Choice of one or more from the following (only one is required)



- Research Internship: Description of agency, grant, or study, my



**Table 7: EDSP Rubric for Comprehensive Portfolio Review (Continued)**

Criterion	Meets	Does not Meet
<b>Criteria to Evaluate Paper Submitted for the Evaluation of Scholarship</b>		
<b>The paper submitted as part of the evaluation of scholarship</b> is either published, submitted, or of publishable quality if it is not yet submitted.		
<b>Criteria to Evaluate Oral Exam for Comprehensive Portfolio Review</b>		
<p><b>Oral presentation of synthesis paper includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear statement of purpose of the research,</li> <li>Clear research questions that allow student to address the purpose of research</li> <li>Summary of major points in the body of literature</li> <li>Summary of gaps in the literature for this topic</li> <li>Summary of ideas for research designs that will contribute meaningful data to the field.</li> <li>Student demonstrates evidence of analytical and integrative thinking in reflecting on the program at the end of coursework, especially with respect to upcoming dissertation work integrity and ethical practice.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Oral presentation includes a brief review of the student's goal for the program and future employment.</b> Students are able to reflect upon different activities, consider his or her own products and experiences during coursework, and reflect on progress to date in the program. This can include service, research, and teaching experiences</p>		

\_\_\_ **Unsatisfactory: The student has not demonstrated readiness to proceed to the dissertation phase of the program** (specific recommendations for modifications or additional work are provided by the committee). The student has one opportunity to make revisions and schedule **a second meeting no later than six months from the date of the first meeting**. The student will attend to all required actions taken by the committee and provide a checklist that verifies how these actions have been completed. *If the student does not pass the second Comprehensive Portfolio Review, his or her program will be terminated.*





- To recommend revisions and convene a second meeting of the Dissertation Examining Committee to review the dissertation and complete the student's examination.
  - To rule the dissertation (including its examination) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails. Following the examination, the chair, in the presence of the Dean's Representative, must inform the student of the outcome of the examination. The chair and the Dean's Representative both sign a Report of the Examining Committee indicating which of the above alternatives has been
- a/F1 12 Td27







**University of Maryland Statement of Mutual Expectations for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)**

This GTA checklist is intended to improve communication between instructors and GTAs concerning roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Please review this checklist with each GTA at the beginning of each semester and check all items that apply.

Name of Instructor:

Instructor email address:

Graduate teaching assistant name:

GTA email address:

Course:

Semester/year:

Start Date:

End Date:

This is a:

10 hour a week GTA appointment

20 hour a week GTA appointment

other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

This form is being completed by (please check one):

The instructor only

The GTA only

The instructor and GTA together

**Expectations regarding professionalism (check all that apply)**

- Attend all regularly scheduled classes
- Arrive on time to class and meetings
- Respond promptly to emails from students and instructor
- Meet deadlines for grading and other responsibilities
-

- Attend, manage, and teach all recitation/discussion/laboratory sections as needed
- Prepare recitation/discussion/laboratory material with instructor input
- Coordinate recitation/discussion/laboratory with lectures, with instructor input
- Arrange with the instructor for date and time to hold office hours. If unable to hold office hours on the prearranged date and time, immediately notify instructor to arrange for alternate accommodations for the students
- Assist with identifying underperforming students and communicate with instructors regarding these students
- Hold extra help or review sessions for students, as appropriate
- Provide corrective feedback to students in a positive and constructive manner
- Provide clear explanations of course material to students
- Supervise, train, and manage undergraduate teaching assistants in coordination with the instructor
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of course content
- Stay informed and ahead of the course schedule to anticipate and plan for upcoming assignments, exams, deadlines, etc.)
- Help students stay informed and ahead of the course schedule to anticipate and plan for upcoming assignments, exams, deadlines, etc.)
- Provide guest lectures
- Grade assignments and provide solutions in a timely manner
- Be available to assist with grading exams when needed
- Distribute laboratory material to students
- Other (please specify)

**Expectations of GTA for supporting instructor (check all that apply)**

- Manage ELMS or other course websites
- Learn to use technology or equipment used in the course
- Assist in preparation of classroom activities (class demonstrations, videos, laboratory assignments, etc.)
- Prepare and/or provide quiz questions and/or solutions
- Prepare and/or provide exam questions and/or solutions
- Maintain the grade book
- Photocopy exams and other materials in advance of class
- Coordinate ADS exams and assist with ADS accommodations
- Set up PowerPoint slides, lab equipment, or other material before class
- Other (please specify)

**Expectations of instructor mentorship of the GTA (check all that apply)**

- Review syllabus with TA prior to semester
- Provide clear directions in grading exams and assignments
- Mentor TA regarding teaching pedagogy
- Assist TA in developing material for guest lectures
- Provide ample advanced notice of scheduled assignments or changes to assignments
- Communicate with TA on a regular basis to discuss class
- Review UMD policies with TA

