



MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas Tech University System

# **Special Education Program Handbook**

*Master's Degree*

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Special Education Diagnostician program! As faculty we look forward to meeting you and to your participation in our classes. We are committed to facilitating your growth in the knowledge and skills needed to become a competent educational diagnostician. Plus, we hope that as you pursue your Master's degree, you will enjoy the experience shared with your colleagues, your fellow students.

This student handbook governs Educational Diagnostician candidate's program. However, the MSU Texas catalog is the final authority regarding degree requirements. This handbook is not designed to replace the graduate catalog and it is the candidate's responsibility to become familiar with the graduate catalog.

## MSU Texas Mission and Values

Midwestern State University (MSU Texas) is a leading public liberal arts university committed to providing students with rigorous undergraduate and graduate education in the liberal arts and the professions. Through an emphasis upon teaching, augmented by the opportunity for students to engage in research and creative activities alongside faculty and to participate in co-curricular and service programs, MSU Texas prepares its graduates to embark upon their careers or pursue advanced study. The university's undergraduate education is based upon a comprehensive arts and sciences core curriculum. The understanding that students gain of themselves, others, and the social and natural world prepares them to contribute constructively to society through their work and through their private lives.

### MSU Texas Values

On September 28-29, 2021, 109 members of MSU Texas – students, faculty, staff and community – gathered to identify the core values that unite us. The details of these values can be found on the [MSU Texas Values Journey website](#) and are broadly:

- People-Centered
- Community
- Integrity
- Visionary
- Connections

## West College of Education Mission and Values

The mission of the Gordon T. & Ellen West College of Education (WCOE), a community of learners, is to prepare successful, reflective professionals through the use of best practice. Although the WCOE has its roots in the preparation of teachers, principals, and school counselors, we also seek to prepare individuals who want to work as dyslexia specialists, reading specialists, educational diagnosticians, superintendents, general counselors, human resources specialists, training and development specialists, and professionals in sports and leisure studies.

### WCOE Philosophy and Values

WCOE believes that learning changes both individuals and society. Developing resiliency and tolerance enhances an individual's potential. Through education, the individual becomes a critical thinker and an effective problem solver. Individuals with a cause beyond self-contribute to an informed, democratic, and synergistic society. Our faculty continually strives to establish a reflective and collaborative community to enhance the potential of both the learner and society. They are caring and devoted to our mission and philosophy. Whether you seek a career in education or any of the other fields that share our college, we want you to walk away with the knowledge, experience, and confidence to step into a role as a leader in your field.

## Mission Statement for MEd, Special Education

The mission of the Master of Education degree with a major in Special Education is to prepare candidates to lead their schools and communities in providing services to students with disabilities. The Master of Education in Special Education for graduates will prepare them with the knowledge and skills required to provide leadership on their campuses and in their communities in providing services for students who have disabilities. The degree will then help them develop knowledge and skills in a variety of advanced areas of special education. Students completing the Master of Education with a major in Educational Leadership with a Special Education concentration may concurrently include courses for diagnostician certification upon approval of the Educational Leadership and Special Education program coordinators.

The Master of Education in Special Education with an emphasis in dyslexia is designed for teachers interested in working with children or adults who have dyslexia or related disorders. Completion of this degree qualifies the student to apply for professional certification upon completion of a comprehensive examination by the Academic Language Therapists Association (ALTA). Upon passing the exam, graduates will also receive the title of Licensed Dyslexia Therapist (LDT).

## Educational Diagnostician Program Mission Statement

The MEd in Special Education with a track toward Educational Diagnostician is for teachers who have Texas certification in special education and is designed to prepare them as Educational Diagnosticians who can use their leadership in providing services to students with disabilities in their schools and communities. Completion of the degree requirements allows students to apply for professional certification upon satisfactory completion of the state mandated TExES requirements as an Educational Diagnostician.

## Program Objectives

The Master of Education Degree with a major in Special Education is designed for the practicing teacher to build professional knowledge and practical skills. Completion of degree requirements will allow the candidate to become certified as an Educational Diagnostician. Candidates who are not practicing special educators may be required to complete leveling courses. As a candidate of the program you will:

- Apply what you learn through meaningful practicum experiences.
- Be up to date with the literature of the field and evidence-based practices.
- Understand the issues, trends, and research that influence contemporary education.

## Core Program Faculty

The following are core faculty associated with the Educational Diagnostician Program. Core faculty also serves as Faculty Advisors for students in the program.

### **Dr. Edward Karl Schultz**

- Degree: Ph.D. from University of North Texas
- Primary Courses Taught: Sped 6613, SPED 6633, SPED 6013
- Primary Research/Clinical Interests: Assessment
- Office Phone: (940)397-6203
- Email Address: [edward.schultz@msutexas.edu](mailto:edward.schultz@msutexas.edu)

### **Dr. Emily Smith**

- Degree: Ed.D. from Lamar University
- Primary Courses Taught: Exceptional Individuals, Special Education Law, Special Education Leadership, TIER III Reading Interventions

- Primary Research/Clinical Interests: Autism, Assessment
- Office Phone: (940)397-4800
- Email Address: [emily.smith@msutexas.edu](mailto:emily.smith@msutexas.edu)

## Special Education/Educational Diagnostician Advisory Council

The Special Education/Educational Diagnostician (SPED-ED) Advisory Council chaired by the Special Education (SPED) program coordinator assists in the design, delivery, evaluation, and major policy decisions of the Educational Diagnostician preparation program. Membership is comprised of professional representatives from both P-12 districts and public schools, the director of educator preparation (TEA), certification officer, accreditation specialist, department chair, and dean of the WCOE. The council meets regularly at least two times per year.

## SPED Roles and Responsibilities

- Advise, review, evaluate, recommend and co-construct policies and procedures related to the evaluation and continuous improvement of the SPED program including: program evaluation/satisfaction, key assessments, student recruitment, student quality, and program impact on student learning leading to initial or advanced certification.
- Review and vote on applicant admissions to the educational diagnostician certification program (2 to 4 times per year).
- Advise, review, evaluate, recommend, co-construct, and implement policies and procedures related to the placement and evaluation of SPED program graduate students in field and/or clinical experiences.
- Identify and address issues and concerns related to SPED graduate and program quality and capacity, continuous improvement, and field-based/clinical experiences.
- Review qualifications for university supervisors and site supervisors/mentors who either host or supervise candidates seeking advanced certification along with data related to candidates' evaluations of university supervisors and site supervisors/mentors to ensure highly qualified practitioners.
- In this capacity, SPED may make recommendations in areas above for approval by WCOE College Council. University level changes must also be approved by MSU Texas Graduate Council and/or MSU Texas Academic Council, Board of Regents, Texas Higher Educational Coordinating Board (THECB), and Southern Association for Schools – Commission on colleges (SACS).

## Texas Administrative Code Educators' Code of Ethics

Faculty, candidates, and staff must adhere to the Educators' Code of Ethics as found in 19 TAC §247.2 of the Texas Administrative Code. These standards cover 1) professional ethical conduct, practices, and performance, 2) ethical conduct toward professional colleagues, and 3) ethical conduct toward students. All faculty, candidates, and staff must understand, acknowledge, and adhere to the [Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators](#). A copy of the standards is available upon request.

## Program Code of Ethics

WCOE its faculty, and its candidates adhere to the [Ethics Policy for Employees of Midwestern State University \(OP 52.20\)](#) and the State of Texas licensure laws and regulations. The program has a professional responsibility to ensure that all candidates display ethical, professional, and personal behaviors that comply with these guidelines. For further information about MSU Texas' procedures regarding candidate ethics and conduct, please consult the [Midwestern State University Student Handbook 2022-2023](#).

The Special Education Department, its faculty, and its students adhere to the University Code of Conduct, State of Texas licensure laws and regulations, and the Council for Exceptional Children's Code of Ethics. The program has a professional responsibility to ensure that all students display ethical, professional, and personal behaviors

that comply with these guidelines. Students are strongly encouraged to review, understand, and consult websites for details related to these guidelines:

[Council of Exceptional Children \(CEC\) Code of Ethics and Practices](#)

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

MSU Texas and WCOE are committed to:

A strong institutional environment of diversity, equity, and inclusion fuels creativity, scholarship, respect, innovation, and social justice – all values of our core liberal arts principles and identity. It is our belief that our path of excellence towards teaching and service can be completely fulfilled only with a strong plan and transformational environment that values and supports diversity, seeks to achieve equity, reflects multiculturalism, and promotes inclusion and social justice at all levels.

We strive to create an environment that celebrates differences, respects diversity, provides equity for opportunities, and fulfills the potential of everyone.

### Values:

- We commit to diversity in its myriad of expressions.
- We pledge to welcome our differences in an environment of civility and respect.
- We offer an environment of belonging for all.
- We commit to eliminate discrimination, bias, and harassment at MSU Texas.
- We believe in inclusive cross-cultural understanding and intercultural engagement.
- We adopt curiosity, civility, and multi-cultural approaches as guiding principles.
- We strive to be an agent of change for our external community.

## Disability Support Services

Any student who feels that they may need accommodations due to the impact of a disability should consult Disability Support Services at (940) 397-4140 or <https://msutexas.edu/student-life/disability/>.

## Admission

All students seeking admission to graduate programs in the WCOE must meet 1) MSU Texas requirements, 2) WCOE requirements, 3) and specific academic program requirements. For a prospective candidate to be considered for admission to the Educational Diagnostician preparation program candidates must be accepted to the MSU Texas graduate level Special Education program, and also must satisfy the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) admission requirements.

## Graduate Program Application Procedures

- Complete an application online by visiting [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org) before the set deadlines.
- Pay application fee - \$50 for both domestic and international applicants.
- Submit the following to [admissions@msutexas.edu](mailto:admissions@msutexas.edu):
  - A [departmental application](#),
  - official transcripts,
  - an [Advanced Program Application](#),
  - active Teacher Certificate,
  - Service Record with 3 years of service\*, and
  - WCOE Application Essay (prompt is sent upon receipt of application).

- International students who do not already hold a SBEC approved certification must take the TOEFL and IELTS, which test proficiency of the English language unless the prospective candidate has already been issued a Texas State Board of Education Certificate. Please allow at least 1 month for official scores to be received by the Graduate School.

\*Service Records can be requested from the school district human resources where the prospective candidate has been employed. Alternatively, a candidate may complete program requirements, but will not be eligible for certification testing until they have completed three (3) years of experience as a certified teacher.

Once an application file is complete, a review will be sent to the graduate coordinator for consideration. The Graduate Dean reviews all admission decisions and sends formal notification to each student. For questions about the process, prospective candidates may contact the MSU Texas Graduate School at 940-397-4920.

A prospective candidate must complete a FAFSA for consideration of financial aid (<https://fafsa.ed.gov>). For assistance filling out the form, contact the MSU Texas Financial Aid Office <https://msutexas.edu/finaid/>.

## Educational Diagnostician Admission and Screening Procedures

In addition to the above requirements, the prospective candidates must provide the following evidence to be screened before being considered for admission to the Educational Diagnostician EPP:

1. EPP application on file;
2. bachelor's degree with a GPA of 2.75 from an accredited university or a master's degree with a GPA of 2.75 from an accredited university;
3. standard Teacher Certificate or equivalent;
4. additionally, successful advisory council screening on selected criteria;
5. a written essay with a minimum score of 10;
6. signed adherence to the Educator Code of Ethics; and
7. signed acknowledgement of state of Texas criminal background check requirements.

Candidates are notified of formal admission and of formal acceptance date in writing upon approval from the SPED Advisory Council. Candidate must accept the offer of formal admission in writing before formal admission can be finalized per 19 TAC §227.17

## Prior Coursework and Experience

As an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) in the state of Texas, WCOE reserves the right to verify the equivalency of coursework and training received by prospective candidates for any program requirements. Prospective candidates must provide documentation of prior academic coursework and/or relevant training (such as, transcripts and certifications) with their application portfolio during the process of admission to the EPP. Teaching experience without certification will not count toward certification or toward coursework after admission into EPP.

## MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS

Per Title 19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(A) military service members or military veteran candidates may receive course credit for verified military service, training or education toward the training, education, work experience, or related requirements (other than certification examinations) for educator certification requirements, provided that the military service, training, or education is directly related to the certification being sought. If you qualify,



you will have your experience aligned with curriculum/coursework to identify appropriate credit toward your degree and certification.

### NON-MILITARY SERVICE MEMBERS

Per Title 19 TAC §228.35(a)(5)(B), teacher candidates admitted into WCOE EPP who are not military service members or military veterans may substitute prior or ongoing service, training, or education provided that the experience, education, or training is not also counted as a part of an internship, clinical teaching, or practicum requirements. Training or education sought to be substitutes for WCOE coursework must be provided by an approved EPP or an accredited institution of higher education within the past five years, and must be directly related to the certification being sought. If you qualify, you will have your experience aligned with curriculum/coursework to identify appropriate credit toward your degree and certification.

### EVALUATION OF OUT-OF-COUNTRY CREDIT

Pursuant to 19 TAC §227.10(f), applicants with credentials earned outside the United States must have their credit evaluated by an accrediting organization recognized by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to determine equivalency to the standards specified in code. More details can be found on [TEA's Certification Based on Credentials from Another Country website](#).

### International Students/English Proficiency

Undergraduate and graduate-level candidates should contact the [Global Education Office](#) for the necessary requirements for admission to MSU Texas.

International candidates must be able to communicate, listen, read, write and comprehend the English language sufficiently to use it easily and readily in daily communication and teaching. English language proficiency shall be evidenced by one of the following:

- Completion of an undergraduate or graduate degree at an accredited institution in the United States.
- Verification of minimum scaled scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language Internet-Based Test (TOEFL iBT) of 24 for speaking, 22 for listening, 22 for reading and 21 for writing
- If an undergraduate or graduate degree was earned at an institution in a country outside of the United States listed in Figure: [19 TAC §230.11\(b\)\(5\)\(C\)](#).

An educator who has received a State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) - issued standard certificate shall not be required to demonstrate English language proficiency as prescribed above for the purposes of admission into the EPP to obtain additional SBEC-issued certifications.

## Notification of Criminal Conviction, Denial of Certification, and Criminal Background Checks

### Condition of Certification

As required by Texas Occupations Code (TOC), Section 53.152, candidates should be aware that an individual who has been convicted of any offense, in any state, may be denied an initial or advanced certificate. By completing the admission process into an initial or advanced program, each individual is aware that even after completion of a degree, if at any point that individual was convicted of any crime, of any degree, he/she may still graduate from the program but may be denied a certificate by the State Board of Educator Certification.

### Criminal Background Checks

Pursuant to the Texas Education Code (TEC), §22.083, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as an educator; and pursuant to the TEC, §22.0835, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching.

## Preliminary Checks

All candidates enrolled in an educator preparation program are eligible to request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation. A Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation is a non-mandatory, non-binding evaluation of an individual's self-reported criminal history. Information on Preliminary Criminal History Evaluations can be found on the [TEA Texas Education Agency website](#).

## Entrance to Public Schools

Candidates are required to complete a criminal background check for entrance into public schools. There is variation in the degree of background checks across school districts. These background checks may take as many as 3 weeks to complete before a candidate may enter a public-school classroom. It is at the discretion of the district, not the EPP, as to how, when, and where these background checks are conducted. In addition, a school district reserves the right to deny entry to any person, regardless of the result of the background check.

## Reporting Suspicion or Incidence of Child Abuse

Texas law says anyone who thinks a child, or person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential. Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony. Time frames for investigating reports are based on the severity of the allegations. Candidates should report abuse to the building administrator, WCOE school-based educator, and the Texas Abuse Hotline:

- By Phone: (1-800-252-5400), or
- Online: [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact\\_us/report\\_abuse.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_us/report_abuse.asp)

Candidate are required to complete the Protection of Minor Children Training prior to clinical experiences with minor children.

## Program Requirements

### Department of Special Education Statement of Expectations

Programs in the Department of Special Education are charged with providing a high level of training and supervising the development of pre-service educational diagnosticians. Faculty must evaluate students based on their academic, professional, and personal qualities. A student's progress in the program may be interrupted for failure to comply with academic standards or if a student's interpersonal or emotional status interferes with being able to meet the demands of an educational diagnostician. To ensure proper training, the diagnostician-in-training must abide by relevant ethical codes and demonstrate professional knowledge, technical and interpersonal skills, a professional attitude, and moral character. For further information about MSU Texas's policies regarding student ethics and conduct, please consult the [MSU Texas Student Handbook](#).

### Confidentiality

Education courses often require sharing personal information, both private student/parent information and student's personal experiences. Educational Diagnosticians-in-training must agree to keep such information confidential and do not discuss private information outside class unless discussion with professors is appropriate.

## Transition Points for Educational Diagnostician Certification

Admission	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
an application on file (forms available in Graduate School Office)	Application, Service Record, Teaching Certificate	✓	✓
Bachelor's degree and standard Texas Teacher Certificate or equivalent;	GPA of 2.75	✓	✓
Grade point average of 2.75 in prior degree or 2.75 in last 60 hours of coursework		✓	✓
Successful committee screening on selected criteria.	Graduate Essay with a score of 10 or better	✓	✓
Approval of Teacher Education Committee		✓	✓
Criminal Records – Right to Preliminary Background Check	Signed policy acknowledgement submitted with admission acceptance to Tk20	✓	✓
Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators	Signed acknowledgement and agreement to abide by the code submitted with admission acceptance to Tk20	✓	✓
Orientation & Foundational Concepts	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
WCOE SPED Handbook	Signed Handbook Acknowledgement submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Dyslexia Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Mental Health Texas Behavior Support Initiative Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Substance Abuse Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Youth Suicide Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Criminal Records – Right to Preliminary Background Check	Reaffirmation of understanding submitted to D2L	✓	✓
Privacy and Confidentiality Pledge	Privacy Pledge Quiz (100%)	✓	✓
Educator Ethics	Ethics Quiz (100%)	✓	✓
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting	Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Quiz (100%)	✓	✓
Human Trafficking	Human Trafficking Quiz (100%)		✓
COURSES (@ indicates Core Course)	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
COUN 6013 Human Relations			
EDUC 5053 Introduction to Research			
EDUC 6753 Applied Research			

COURSES (@ indicates Core Course)	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
SPED 6013 Teaching Strategies for Affective Disorders			
@SPED 6633 Vocational, Motor Skills, and Assistive Technology Assessment	Low Incidence Exam (80% Proficiency) Transition Assessment Report Assessment (80% Proficiency)	# *	# *
@SPED 6913 Special Education Law	SPED Legislation Research Project Assessment (80% Proficiency)	#	#
SPED 6953 Special Graduate Topics in Special Education			
SPED 6963 Foundations of Ethics and Practice Standards	Professional Development Assessment (80% Proficiency)	*	*
@SPED 6613 Individual Assessment I	Constructed Response Case Study I Assessment (80% Proficiency)	*	*
@SPED 6623 Individual Assessment II (pre-requisite SPED 6613)	Constructed Response Case Study 2 Assessment (80% Proficiency)	*	*
@SPED 6943 Practicum in Special Education (pre-requisites: SPED 6613 and SPED 6623) completed in last semester	Practicum Evaluation Assessment (20 + Recommendation)	✓	✓

PRACTICUM	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
1. <u>Candidate Info and Site Supervisor Qualification Form (CISSQ) distributed.</u>	<b>Accreditation Specialist</b> distributes training to site supervisors and monitors completion of training within the three-week timeline.	✓	✓
2. <u>Program Coordinator collaborates with district to assign qualified Site Supervisor (min 3 years exp and certified in field)</u>	<b>Accreditation Specialist</b> tracks receipt of CISSQ documentation, verifies site supervisor qualifications and uploads to assessment system.	✓	✓
3. <u>15-week practicum placement</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidate documents 180 practicum hours tied to Texas Educational Diagnostician Standards</li> <li>1 observation in each 3<sup>rd</sup> of practicum</li> <li>First contact, pre-conference, observation, post-conference with substantive feedback</li> <li>Signatures of candidate, site supervisor, and university supervisor</li> <li>Completed time logs</li> </ul>	✓	✓
4. <u>Site Supervisor completes summative evaluation of candidate</u>	WCOE Practicum Evaluation	*	*
5. <u>University Supervisor completes summative evaluation of candidate</u>	WCOE Practicum Evaluation	*	*

PRACTICUM	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
6. <u>Pass Practice Test with at least 80% in each competency and 10 hours of practice</u>	Certify Teacher Educational Diagnostician Practice Test (80% Proficiency)	#	#
RECOMMENDATION FOR CERTIFICATION	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
1. <u>Satisfactory scores on the Texas Educational Diagnostician Exam (153)</u>	Assessment of Content and Professional Knowledge (80% Proficiency)	#	#
2. <u>Satisfactory Practicum</u>	Earn grade of at least a 'C'	*	*
3. <u>Apply to State Board for Educator Certification</u>	Application for certification is made by applying online at <a href="http://www.tea.state.tx.us">http://www.tea.state.tx.us</a> .	✓	✓
4. <u>State review</u>	Upon receipt of the University recommendation, the State Board for Educator Certification screens all applicants for Texas certificates for a record of felony or misdemeanor conviction through the Texas Department of Public Safety.	✓	✓
POST GRADUATION	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
1. <u>Satisfaction of employer</u>	Survey emailed for first 3 years of employment in field of certification	✓	
2. <u>Satisfaction of completer</u>	Survey emailed for first 3 years of employment in field of certification	✓	

US-University Supervisor

SS-Site Supervisor

\*Performance/Skill Assessment

#Knowledge Assessment

✓Accreditation Requirement

## Practicum Guidelines

The Practicum requirements of the program require considerable time management to acquire 160 hours required by TEA (180 Hours required for MSU Texas). Practicum is defined as a structured, field-based training. Practicum hours will occur during SPED 6943 Practicum).

It is necessary for students to arrange for a Practicum site prior to the beginning of any clinical experience courses (SPED 6613, SPED 6623 and SPED 6913) to allow for the maximum amount of time to fulfill the hour and class experience requirements. According to the Graduate Catalog:

*SPED 6943: Practicum in Special Education*

*Prerequisite(s): Satisfactory completion of SPED 6613, SPED 6623, SPED 6633 AND SPED 6963. (Formerly: 12 hours of special education and consent of instructor.) (See course description portion of graduate [catalog](#) for more information about courses.)*

*Field experience (180 hours) in a special educational setting specific to the candidate's career goals. May be repeated for credit.*

Practicum is allowed to be taken after the following courses have been completed. These courses are only offered in the fall and spring semesters:

- SPED 6613 - Individualized Diagnostic Assessment I
- SPED 6623 - Individualized Diagnostic Assessment II
- SPED 6633 - Vocational, Motor Skills, and Assistive Technology Assessment

## School-Based Educator Information

### Approval of Mentors/Placements

The student must complete 180 clock hours of practicum in a TEA accredited school. The semester before practicum is taken, the university supervisor and the cooperating school will collaborate to assign the MSU Texas Practicum Student mentor who will serve as the site supervisor. This person must have an advanced degree and be a certified educational diagnostician who has practiced for a minimum of three years. You will be assigned a University supervisor who will conduct 3 observations during Practicum.

### Training

Each mentor will be provided training covering the contents of the handbook as well as training for the performance evaluations completed during the semester. This web-based training will occur within three weeks of the beginning of placement. All mentors are required to verify the training; documentation of training will be placed in student's file. Professional development will also be provided throughout the semester by the university supervisor as needed.

### Mentor Expectations

Mentors are expected to provide a wide range of experiences directly related to the educational diagnostician standards and to provide frequent and systematic feedback. In addition, the mentor will help monitor progress by examining and approving the student's practicum hours and discussing the standards. The mentor will indicate, virtually, that they can verify the candidates work and subsequent discussion.

- **Guiding the field experience:** the mentor will work closely with the candidate to provide experiences that build on the skills previously learned and will provide the appropriate supervision for the task (e.g., test administration, report writing).
- **Giving feedback to the candidate:** informal feedback will occur throughout the semester as well as formal feedback via the practicum evaluation.

### Practicum Evaluation

Practicum experiences: Extensive field experiences including testing students from a wide range of age groups and backgrounds, parents, and supervised experiences with educational diagnosticians are required to be documented in Tk20. Candidates are required to document 180 hours of experience using the [Texas Educational Diagnostician Standards](#) as a guide for each experience. By the end of Practicum, candidates must have activities logged into Tk20 meeting each Texas Educational Standard. These experiences must equal a total of 180 hours. This is in addition to the hands-on experience you will gain from the other courses and will ensure your competency and confidence as an educational diagnostician. As most of you are in a position of working with students with disabilities, many of these activities can be done in the "flow" of your current job. When providing documentation, keep in mind that you are coming from the perspective of an educational diagnostician.

All 180 hours must be submitted into Tk20 and approved by your mentor for you to receive credit for the Practicum course. **Since this is a TEA requirement, no exceptions will be made.**

## Completion of Practicum

Faculty reserve the professional responsibility to guarantee that our graduates meet the minimum level of competency required to be an educational diagnostician. As such, a student may be required to take additional practicum hours to improve skills.

Documentation of Practicum Log, On-site Evaluation, and Summary will be placed in students' permanent records for use in replying to requests for references and licensure/accreditation audits.

## WCOE Certification Exam Testing Policy

The following steps are required before a candidate is permitted to take certification exams.

- Take initial practice exam (Certify Teacher).
- If the candidate scores less than 80% in each domain and competency, they must complete study tracker program in Certify Teacher. Once study tracker program is completed, candidate must retake practice exam.
- If the second practice exam is less than 80% in each domain and competency, the candidate must repeat the process until 80% is reached in each domain and competency.
- Candidates must have at least 10 hours of study time total at the end of the practice exam process. If 10 hours is not reached through the practice exams process, then additional study hours must be completed to reach the minimum requirement of 10 hours in Certify Teacher.
- Once students met the requirements above and would like to be released for testing, please complete the following [form](#).

Upon completion of the form, you will be notified within 24-48 hours of your ability to schedule your certification exam. Please view the following [document](#) for assistance creating your testing account, registering for your exam, and scheduling your exam.

For students who are not successful in passing their certification exams, the following requirements must be met before the student will be allowed to repeat the exam.

- Complete a practice exam-Certify Teacher.
- If the student scores less than 80% in each domain and competency, complete study tracker program in Certify Teacher. Once study tracker program is completed, retake practice exam.
- If the second practice exam is less than 80% in each domain and competency, repeat the process until 80% is reached in each domain and competency.
- Students must have at least 10 hours of study time total at the end of the practice exam process. If 10 hours is not reached through the practice exams process, then additional study hours must be completed to reach the minimum requirement of 10 hours in Certify Teacher.

Work with an assigned professor on test readiness and exam preparation. The Certification Officer will assign a professor to work with the candidate. Please email Kayla Meaders at [kayla.meaders@msutexas.edu](mailto:kayla.meaders@msutexas.edu) for instructions on this step of the protocol. The assigned professor will decide what course of action you must complete before letting the Certification Officer know that you are ready to retest.

## Faculty Test Tutoring/Guided Training Expectation

To help candidates prepare for a certification test that they have already failed (or that the test has changed since the candidate completed), a faculty member (tutor) will be assigned to work with that candidate on test preparation skills and content area. This will take the form of tutoring or guided training. Once a candidate is assigned, the candidate must contact the faculty member to set a time to meet with them. The tutoring is in addition to any courses or training modules that are indicated for the student.

The tutor should meet with the candidate in person or virtually (e.g. via Zoom) for the content and test preparation. The following are suggestions for tutoring that have been very successful:

- Look at the areas in which candidate received less than 70% at the competency level on the failed test (or on the practice test if it is a candidate that needs tutoring because the standards changed or five years have passed since completing the program)
- Work on each competency using an inquiry approach using test question examples.
- Unpack each question.
- Ask candidate to read the prompt and then ask them to highlight the keywords.
- Make sure they know what the key words mean
- Read through each answer choice and force the candidate to say yes, no, or maybe if they believe the choice could be the answer. Ask them why.
- Have the candidate eliminate all but two answers.
- As you work through the answers with the candidate, identify content knowledge that may be lacking.
- Study the identified needed content knowledge with the candidate.
- If test anxiety is identified by the candidate as one of the factors contributing to problems with the test, provide and discuss strategies to address test anxiety. There are resources for this in the Counseling Center. You can contact Pam Midget to obtain the resources.
- Consider spending about an hour on each identified competency. Tutoring will probably need to be divided into 45-minute to one-hour sessions.
- Keep in mind that if there are not enough released test questions for a competency, you might need to find more questions or create some on your own.
- After you have completed tutoring with the candidate, have them retake the Certify Teacher practice test or a TExES content test. If they pass all competencies with at least an 80%, let the Certification Officer know that the candidate has completed tutoring. If the candidate does not pass all of the competencies with at least an 80%, continue working with them on those competencies.
- For Constructed Response questions:
  - Have candidates read through the question and highlight key words. Ensure they understand the key words.
  - Have candidate write a construct response.
  - Assess candidate's response using the rubric.
  - Discuss with the candidate why they received the rubric score for each criterion.
  - Help candidate reshape the structured response so that it would receive a 4 on each criterion.

The guided training modules are self-paced and specifically designed to assist the candidate to increase their conceptual understanding.

- The faculty member will assess the TExES results and design a study plan that addresses any competency that the candidate scores below 80%.
- The candidate will be provided a study plan that will focus on those deficits.
- The self-paced modules include graphic organizers, note-taking strategies, practice mini-quizzes, and open-ended responses to help them accommodate the content.
- The modules will unpack the content into small chunks and allow immediate feedback with the mini-quizzes.
- Each module open-ended assignments and graphic organizers will be shared through google drive with the faculty member for more in-depth feedback.
- After the candidate has completed the modules, they will take a TExES content test. If the candidate passes all competencies with at least an 80%, the faculty member will let the Certification Officer



know that they candidate has completed the test preparation. If the candidate does not pass all of the competencies with at least an 80%, continue working with them on those competencies.

### Educational Diagnostician Certification Returning Finishers

If an educational diagnostician certification candidate is seeking test approval and the standards and/or test has changed since the candidate completed the teacher certification program at MSU Texas, the candidate will be required to:

- Repeat the WCOE certification exam testing [policy](#) (above);
- Be assigned to and work with WCOE faculty member(s);
- Complete up to an additional 15 hours of coursework from MSU Texas and/or MSU Texas training modules before test approval; and
- If a candidate has returned to MSU Texas after a period of five or more years following the academic year of program completion, and the candidate is seeking test or retest approval for teacher certification, the candidate must complete an additional 18 hours of coursework from MSU Texas before test approval.

### Professional Organizations and Student Involvement

The Educational Diagnostician Program strongly encourages students to learn about and become involved in assessment-related professional organizations. Among many other important benefits, involvement in such organizations:

- Promotes professional skill development
- Increases knowledge from leaders in the counseling profession
- Provides non-university-related networking opportunities
- Offers additional professional endorsement possibilities
- Helps build one's resume
- Provides continuing education units
- Increases excitement for and devotion to the counseling profession

In particular, the Program encourages student membership and involvement in the following three professional organizations:

#### Texas Educational Diagnostician Association (TEDA)

It is the mission of TEDA to promote the profession of educational diagnosticians through programs, research, and establishing and maintaining professional standards in order to better serve the educational needs of exceptional children and youth. [TEDA](#)

#### Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. CEC advocates for appropriate governmental policies, sets professional standards, provides professional development, advocates for individuals with exceptionalities, and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice. [CEC](#)

#### Council for Educational Diagnostic Services (CEDS)

The Council for Educational Diagnostic Services is an international community of assessment professionals who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. CEDS's mission is to improve, through excellence and

advocacy, the assessment of children and youth with exceptionalities and to enhance engagement of their families. [CEDS](#)

## Professional Fitness Policy

Admitted candidates (teacher, educational diagnostician, school counseling, principal and superintendent) are expected to meet specified non-academic standards that are necessary to be competent teachers. The intent is to ensure that the candidates recommended for certification are able to effectively and independently carry out the duties for which they are being prepared. The fitness criteria include personality characteristics, responsibility characteristics, communication skills, social relationships, and commitment to the teaching profession. Students who have been identified with a demonstrable discrepancy by one or more professors or cooperating teachers will meet with the Fitness Alert Committee to discuss options and develop a growth plan. The Fitness Alert Committee consists of five faculty members in the West College of Education appointed by a department chair. Failure to make satisfactory progress on the growth plan may result in denied admission to clinical teaching or removal from the program. In extreme cases, the student may be immediately removed. More details can be found in the Fitness for Teaching Profession and Counseling Out of Program Procedures outlined in the [West College of Education Professional Fitness Policy](#).

## Counseling Out Procedure

Candidates who have multiple Fitness Alerts/concerns forwarded to a department chair, certification officer or dean may receive counseling regarding the appropriateness of the teaching/education profession. WCOE concerns may be based upon the knowledge, skills and/or disposition outlined in syllabi and the conceptual framework, but may also include engagement in the profession. WCOE is ultimately responsible for the performance of its completers and reserves the right to determine who is identified as a WCOE teacher/educator professional.

## WCOE Complaint Process Complaints

Pursuant to 19 TAC §228.70 WCOE has adopted a complaint procedure for timely resolution of complaints before a complaint is filed with TEA. The details can be found on the website as well as posted on the bulletins of each level of Bridwell Hall at MSU Texas. For information on how to file a complaint to TEA please send inquiries to [collegeofed@msutexas.edu](mailto:collegeofed@msutexas.edu).

Review the policy here: <https://msutexas.edu/academics/education/wcoe-complaint-policy.pdf>

## Program Accreditation

The Educational Diagnostician program is designed to meet the requirements as designated in the [Texas Educational Diagnostician certification standards](#) and is also aligned to the [Council for Exceptional Children's \(CEC\) advanced preparation standards](#). The Educational Diagnostician program is accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Southern Association of Colleges (SACS). In addition, MSU Texas's WCOE is nationally accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

## Quality Assessment System

### Quality and Strategic Evaluation

The Educational Diagnostician program maintains a quality assurance system comprised of multiple measures (see transition point chart, p.18) that require candidates to progress in a specific order. Candidates for advanced preparation demonstrate their proficiencies to understand and apply knowledge and skills

appropriate to their professional field of specialization so that learning and development opportunities for all P-12 students are enhanced, through:

- Applications of data literacy;
- Use of research and understanding of qualitative, quantitative and/or mixed methods research methodologies;
- Employment of data analysis and evidence to develop supportive school environments;
- Leading and/or participating in collaborative activities with others such as peers, colleagues, teachers, administrators, community organizations, and parents;
- Supporting appropriate applications of technology for their field of specialization; and
- Application of professional dispositions, laws and policies, codes of ethics and professional standards appropriate to their field of specialization.

Advanced program completers have opportunities to learn and apply specialized content and discipline knowledge contained in approved state and/or national discipline-specific standards ([TEA](#) and [CEC](#)).

As noted above, candidates have opportunities to practice applications of content knowledge and skills learned in course work. The Educational Diagnostician APAC designs these experiences and assessments for the experience along with all other key assessments are verified through Lawshe's validation.

## Assessment Cycle

WCOE blends with the same assessment cycle as the University Assessment Committee with some additional steps. The following dates are approximate given changes in the calendar but hold true from year to year.

Event	Deadline
<b>Annual Program Report Templates Available on Z drive</b> Z:>College of Education>Continuous Imp Data and Analyses>Data and Analyses [Academic Year]>Annual Report Forms	~Sept 18
<b>Program-level data posted on the Z drive for review</b> Z:>College of Education>Continuous Imp Data and Analyses>Data and Analyses [Academic Year]>>Program Data Reports	~Sept 18
<b>Faculty/Program Review of [Academic Year]&gt;Data</b>	Sept 20-Oct 16
<b>Completed Annual Reports Due – upload to Z drive</b> Z:>College of Education>Continuous Imp Data and Analyses>Data and Analyses [Academic Year]>>Annual Report Forms	~Oct 16
<b>College Wide Data Analysis Meeting</b>	~Oct 23
<b>University Assessment Plans due into WEAVE</b>	~Nov 1
<b>Dean's Review Plans</b>	Nov 1- Dec 1
<b>Assessment Cycle Closes</b>	Dec 1
<b>Peer Review Process including APAC</b>	Dec 1 – Feb 1
<b>Peer Review forms are due to Office of Institutional Effectiveness</b>	Feb 1

Event	Deadline
Final Catalog Changes for following academic year due to Provost Office	First Friday of Feb.

## Continuous Improvement Criteria

### *Employment Needs*

Data regarding employment needs has been analyzed to develop a graduate recruiting plan. The goal of the graduate recruiting plan is to admit a pool of candidates that reflects the diversity of America's teacher pool and, over time, should reflect the diversity of P-12 students. Data includes community, state, national, regional, or local needs for school and district staff prepared in advanced fields. Evidence of the recruiting plan is shared with the APAC and evaluated on a regular basis.

### *APAC admission review*

The Educational Diagnostician program APAC regularly reviews admission criteria. Each cohort must achieve a college grade point average of 3.0.

### *Selectivity during preparation*

The Educational Diagnostician program has set the following performance criteria for each of the key assessments. Candidates must achieve this minimum performance at each step to move forward in the program. Performance data is analyzed each fall during the college data analysis window and relayed to the APAC. Evidence can be found in the Continuous Improvement folder on the z drive. Evidence is shared with the APAC and evaluated on a regular basis as a part of the Assessment Cycle.

### *Satisfaction of Employers*

The Educational Diagnostician program surveys employers of current/recent practitioners. Data from this survey is shared with the APAC. The survey measures employer satisfaction with completers' preparation and that completers reach employment milestones such as promotion and retention. Evidence is shared with the APAC and evaluated on a regular basis as a part of the Assessment Cycle.

### *Satisfaction of Completers*

The Educational Diagnostician program surveys completers that are currently serving in an educational diagnostician role. Data from this survey is shared with the APAC. The survey measures employed completers' perceived preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job, and that the preparation was effective. Evidence is shared with the APAC and evaluated on a regular basis as a part of the Assessment Cycle.

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Collaboration for Practicum Placements

Emily Rutherford, Ed.D.  
West College of Education  
Midwestern State University  
Wichita Falls, TX 76308  
[emily.rutherford@msutexas.edu](mailto:emily.rutherford@msutexas.edu)  
940.397.4800

Dear Administrator,

**(Insert name)** is taking their capstone course, SPED 6943 Special Education Practicum, to complete their degree and/or certification requirements to become an educational diagnostician. The purpose of this communication is to obtain your permission to help her meet preparation requirements. According to TEA, an Educational diagnostician program must meet the following requirements.

<u><a href="#">RULE §239.82</a></u>
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(a) Structured, field-based training must be focused on actual experiences with each of the standards identified in §239.83 of this title (relating to Standards required for the Educational Diagnostician Certificate) to include experiences with diverse types of students, grade levels, and campuses.

(b) An educator preparation program must develop and implement specific criteria and procedures that allow a candidate to substitute related professional educational diagnostician training and/or experience directly related to the standards identified in §239.83 of this title for part of the preparation coursework or other program requirements.

\*Note: Educational Diagnosticians candidates are required to complete 180 hours which will be completed is SPED 6623.

**(insert name)** has had extensive training and sufficient experience directly related to the standards up to this point, but needs actual experience administering individualized assessments on real campuses. **(insert name)** has documented (written, video) proficiency administering, scoring, and reporting with contemporary assessment tools (e.g., WISC-5, WJ-IV WIAT-III) and has actually met the requirements to obtain a temporary educational diagnostician certification. I am seeking permission for the following listed below.

1. Allow a staff member to act as mentor to the student and serve as a local contact person and liaison between the district/school and their university supervisor. The minimum requirements are that the person has an advanced degree and any advanced certificate (e.g., Ed Diag, LSSP, principal)
2. Between **(insert dates)**, the student be allowed to administer, under supervision, 3 individualized assessments (can be a cognitive or achievement or adaptive behavior). Hopefully this can be done in the flow of the student's job using regular time, personal time, conference periods, or other flexible scheduling. This would be the minimum.

Please email me ([Emily Rutherford](mailto:Emily.Rutherford)) if you have any concerns about their ability to fulfill the requirements of an educational diagnostician practicum student. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
*Emily N. Rutherford, Ed.D.*  
Emily N. Rutherford, Ed.D.



## Educational Diagnostician

### Appendix B: Practicum Candidate Information and Site Supervisor Qualifications Form

#### PLACEMENT INFORMATION

**Candidate's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Placement Semester/Year:** (i.e. Fall 2019) \_\_\_\_\_

**School/Site Placement Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**District or Co-op Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**University (Field) Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Site Supervisor/Mentor Credential Requirements:**

- Certification in the Candidate's Field
- Minimum of 3 Years' Experience in the Candidate's Field
- **Copy of Certification** and **OFFICIAL Service Record** must be submitted prior to start of placement.

**Instructions:** Please complete the following information and submit the required documentation to [collegeofed@msutexas.edu](mailto:collegeofed@msutexas.edu) as delineated in the above Site Supervisor/Mentor Credential Requirements.\*

#### SITE SUPERVISOR/MENTOR INFORMATION

**Site Supervisor/Mentor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(PLEASE ENTER FULL NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CERTIFICATE/LICENSE.)

**Site Supervisor/Mentor Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Position:** ☐ Educational Diagnostician ☐ Administrator ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Years' Experience in Current Position:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TEA ID Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Site Supervisor/Mentor's Direct Supervisor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Site Supervisor/Mentor's Direct Supervisor Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employer Type:** ☐ School ☐ District ☐ Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**List All Certification Areas:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Certification/License Attached:** ☐ Yes ☐ No **Certification Area Same as Candidate:** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Official Service Record Attached:** ☐ Yes ☐ No **Min 3 Years' Exp as Ed Diagnostician:** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Administrator Approval** – by providing my signature below, I attest that the above-named site supervisor is an accomplished educator as indicated by student learning and performance evaluations.

**Administrator Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

MUST BE ACTUAL SIGNATURE

#### SITE SUPERVISOR/MENTOR ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

Note that all supervisors must adhere to the Educators' Code of Ethics as established in [19 TAC §247.2](#). Your signature below acknowledges your agreement with this requirement. By selecting the "I Accept" button, you are signing this Agreement electronically. You agree your electronic signature is the legal equivalent of your manual/handwritten signature on this form.

☐ I Accept **Hand Draw Your Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_