



BUFFALO STATE

The State University of New York

Exceptional Education Department Graduate Student Handbook:

Welcome to the Exceptional Education Department

This handbook has been designed to enable individuals interested in applying to the department, as well as accepted graduate students, to have easy access to the information about the Exceptional Education Department. This handbook will also assist students to successfully accomplish all requirements for completion of one of the following graduate programs:

- EXC: Special Education: Early Childhood
- XCE: Special Education: Childhood
- EXS: Special Education: Generalist (7-12) Secondary Program
- BXE: Special Education: Bilingual Certificate Program

Information about procedures used within the Department regarding resources (e.g., Blackboard), expectations (e.g., posting assignments on TaskStream and course evaluations), as well as other departmental policies are provided in this document.

Exceptional Education Department

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1300 Elmwood Avenue

Buffalo, New York 14222

(716) 878-5317 or (716) 878-3038

www.buffalostate.edu/exceptionaleducation/

Revised December 2015



This is the “conceptual framework” used by the School of Education and Teacher Education Unit to describe how individuals progress from the status of “candidates” (at the beginning of their initial programs in special education) expand their understanding of their chosen field of education and graduate from Buffalo State College.

The Exceptional Education Department has been accredited by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) since 1954. More information about NCATE is available at <http://www.ncate.org>. Details about the Exceptional Education Department’s means of retaining its accreditation (and student responsibility with regard to this accreditation) appear later in this handbook.

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Table of Contents

Important Due Dates and Forms to be Completed	p. 5
Mission Statements for Exceptional Education Department	p. 5
Teacher Education Unit	p. 6
Introduction	p. 7
Admission	p. 7-9
Note about Certification	
Deadline Dates	
Program Selection	
Note about Annotations	
Admissions Criteria	
Pre-Major Status	p. 9-10
Change of Major	p. 10
Graduate Programs	p. 10-15
Preliminary Coursework	p. 10-11
Required Internships	p. 11
Full Time Status and Financial Aid	p. 11
Early Childhood Program (EXC)	p. 11-12
Childhood Program (XCE)	p. 12-13
Generalist (7-12) Program (EXS)	p. 13-14
Annotations/Extensions	
Special Education Bilingual Education Extension (BXE)	p. 14-15
Graduate Assistantships	p. 15
Full-time Study	p. 15
Tuition Waiver	p. 15
Duties of Graduate Assistant	p. 15
Non-Matriculated Students	p. 15-16
Applications	p. 16
Graduate Advisement	p. 16-17
Getting Assigned an Adviser	
Meeting with adviser	
Changing adviser	
Policies of the Exceptional Education Department and the Graduate School	p. 17-20
Practica: EXE 504 and EXE 682	p. 17
Application for Admission to Candidacy	p. 18
Grade Requirements	p. 19
Application for EXE 684 and EXE 690	p. 19-20
Application for Graduation	p. 20
Continuous Enrollment	p. 21
Most Frequently Asked Questions	p. 22-25

APPENDIX A:
Exceptional Education Department Graduate Student Handbook:
Critical Information to Know to Ensure a Successful Experience at Buffalo State College

Departmental Practices

Anonymous course evaluations	p. 27
Use of TaskStream for NCATE artifacts	p. 27-28
Use of the Teacher Education Unit Conceptual Framework	p. 28
Use of Blackboard	p. 28-29
Attendance policies	p. 29
Types of courses offered within the department	p. 29
Calendar used for start/stop of the semester and holidays	p. 29
Use of APA format within the Exceptional Education Department	p. 29-30

Taking action: What can be done in terms of the following?

Problem getting into a section of a course that is closed	p. 30
Having an outstanding instructor in a course	p. 30
Having a problem in a course	p. 30
Participating in review of faculty applying for renewal or promotion.....	p. 30-31

Departmental Resources and Awards

Department seminar on APA format	p. 31
Council for Exceptional Children	p. 31
BSC Student Council for Exceptional Children Chapter 117	p. 31
Resource Guide, the CEC “Red Book”	p. 31
Exceptional Education Graduate Research Symposium	p. 32
Awards and Scholarships	p. 32

Other Relevant Campus Policies

Academic Misconduct/Plagiarism	p. 32-33
Financial Aid	p. 33

TaskStream	p. 33
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Important Due Dates and forms to be completed¹

	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Summer</u>	<u>Fall</u>
	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
EXE 504:	September 15	February 15	February 15
EXE 682:	September 15	February 15	February 15
EXE 684:	October 1	NA	March 1
EXE 690:	No special form: special permission granted by EXE 684 instructor after successful completion of the course		
Application to Graduate:	Feb. 1	June 1	Oct.1

Exceptional Education Department Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Exceptional Education Department is preparing reflective practitioners to meet the needs of a diverse population in an increasingly technological society. Within the department’s central responsibility is preparing individuals seeking New York State initial or professional certificates as teachers of childhood education and special education childhood education at the undergraduate level, and special education early childhood, childhood, generalist, and bilingual teachers at the graduate level. Related responsibilities include preparing:

- a. teachers seeking other New York State teaching certificates, and
- b. leadership personnel in Special Education.

Additional missions of the Exceptional Education Department include:

- a. expanding knowledge, especially our understanding of schooling and teaching persons with disabilities;
- b. serving the needs of persons with disabilities in the surrounding community and New York state; and
- c. contributing to students’ and the general population’s understanding of persons with disabilities.

Teacher Education Unit at Buffalo State College

Teacher Education Unit Mission

The mission of the teacher education faculty at Buffalo State College is to prepare reflective facilitators of learning (initial programs) and accomplished reflective educators (advanced programs) to meet the challenge of teaching all learners in a complex, technological, global society. Teacher education faculty engage their collective expertise in teaching; scholarship and research; and service to the community, college, and profession. Faculty value and strive to cultivate a professional climate that promotes teaching excellence, intellectual vitality, and communication through collaboration across programs, among faculty, students, and the larger community.

¹ Each of these requirements has an associated form to be completed. All forms can be found outside Ketchum Hall Room 202, the main office of the department.

Teacher Education Unit Vision

The conceptual framework for all teacher education programs at Buffalo State College articulates the unit's vision, ensures coherence across candidates' programs and reflects commitment to prepare candidates to work effectively with all students including students with culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities.

Teacher Education Unit Core Values

Teacher education faculty believe that the optimal environment for teacher preparation is one in which college-based and school-based teacher educators collaborate closely on mutually identified and mutually beneficial outcomes designed to improve both the college and school settings. The teacher education faculty both recognize and celebrate the diversity which characterizes American educational institutions; furthermore, the faculty are unequivocally committed to preparing educators whose attitudes and professional expertise advance diversity and the diversification of American democratic society. Teacher education faculty are committed to the following fundamental premises: (1) that all students can learn; (2) that all students have a right to learn to their greatest potential; and (3) that all students are entitled to an educational environment where teaching and learning are the most valued of all activities. Buffalo State intends to build upon its strength in teacher education and its location in the second largest city in the state to play a leadership role in addressing the issues relative to the delivery of quality education in urban settings. In support of this initiative, the college will:

- Focus on studying and assisting urban schools
- Seek to recruit students with an interest in urban education
- Develop curricula to focus on training for service in inner city settings
- Develop a capstone program in urban education open to educators across the state
- Provide continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities for teachers in the region.

More information about the *Teacher Education Unit* at Buffalo State College can be found at <http://epp.buffalostate.edu/teacher-education-council>

Introduction

We are pleased you are interested in applying to, or have been accepted to, the graduate programs in the Exceptional Education Department at Buffalo State College. The purpose of this handbook is to provide pre-majors and graduate students with information regarding: (a) admission requirements and application to the major, (b) pre-major status, (c) required coursework for each of the programs, (d) graduate assistantships, (e) academic advisement, (f) policies of the Exceptional Education Department and the Graduate School, and (g) responses to most frequently asked questions. Pre-majors and graduate students should become familiar with all the material in this handbook so that they can make appropriate decisions as they register for courses each semester. Our hope is that by informing students of the required procedures early in their program, they will comply with the necessary steps to facilitate degree completion in a timely fashion. We wish students success in their graduate studies in the Exceptional Education Department.

Admission to the Exceptional Education Department

At the present time, students may only apply for matriculated (major) status in Exceptional Education to be considered for admission. All students who wish to apply for admission for graduate study at Buffalo State College must apply to the Graduate School. The “admission application packet” can be obtained online at: <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/apply>. The supplemental department form can be obtained online as well. Both the Graduate “admission application packet” and the department graduate application must be submitted by the established deadline dates.

Deadline Dates for Matriculated (Major) Status

All application materials must be submitted to the Graduate School (GC 204) by the following dates:

For Fall enrollment-----May 1
For Spring enrollment-----October 1
For Summer enrollment---March 1

Note about Teacher Certification

As per SUNY and NYSED policies, it is required that all applicants seeking admission to the graduate Special Education Early Childhood or Childhood programs, must possess initial certification in the following areas:

- Special Education: Early Childhood Program must have initial certification in grades B-2
- Special Education: Childhood Program must have initial certification grades Childhood 1-6

Applicants seeking admission for the Special Education: Generalist (7-12) Program, may have an initial teaching certification in any teaching area. In this program, there is an option for individuals without any teaching certification to qualify for initial SWD Generalist (7-12) Certification upon completion of their master’s program, pending fulfillment of other certification requirements (e.g., state exams, edTPA, workshops).

Program Selection

Master's programs available in the Exceptional Education Department include Special Education: Early Childhood Special Education (B-2), Childhood Special Education (1-6), and Generalist (7-12) Programs. The department also offers an extension program in Bilingual Special Education, which can be completed concurrently with one of the Master's programs. Applicants must choose the program that reflects the level of their initial certification. For example, individuals who possess a childhood certificate will only be considered for enrollment in the Childhood program. More information about the Bilingual Special Education Certificate of Advanced Study is available upon request.

Admissions Criteria

Applications are reviewed using the Exceptional Education Department's criteria for admission. These criteria include:

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (4.0 scale). Admission is competitive; not all qualified applicants are admitted.
2. Submission of GRE or MAT scores.
3. Certification or eligible for certification in early childhood special education, childhood special education, or generalist 7-12 special education. Applicants with certification or eligible for certification in early childhood education, childhood education, or secondary education must meet additional special education certification requirements once enrolled. For the generalist (7-12) secondary program only, applicants without any teaching certifications will be considered. Applications for the generalist (7-12) secondary program must meet additional special education certification requirements as well as New York State content core and subject area requirements once enrolled.
4. A written statement describing the applicant's philosophy of education and relevant experiences in the field that are relevant to the graduate course of study. This statement must adhere to standard written English.
5. Faculty review.
6. Completion of a supplemental program application (download from <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/supplemental-application-materials>).
7. For the Bilingual Special Education Certificate Program applicants only, candidates must be able to speak English and Spanish, and complete an oral interview.

In addition, all applicants should review the Admission to a Graduate Program section in the Graduate Catalog.

Successful completion of the undergraduate program in exceptional education at Buffalo State is not a guarantee of admission to a graduate program. A point system based on the above criteria is

used to evaluate applicants. Applicants with the highest point totals are admitted to the program each admission period. Only students admitted to the major (as majors or pre-majors) may take courses other than EXE 500.

During the review process, the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies will determine the degree to which the applicant has met a minimum standard on each criterion and make one of the following decisions:

1. Admission to matriculated status in either the Early Childhood (EXC), Childhood (XCE), Generalist (EXS), or Bilingual (BXE) programs.
2. Denial of admission to matriculated status, but admission to pre-major status (EXCW, XCEW, EXSW, BXEW).
3. Denial of admission to the Exceptional Education Department.

Pre-Major Status

Students may not apply for pre-major status. They apply to the graduate program, and the department decides if they are accepted to the program as majors or pre-majors. Pre-majors may enroll, by advisement, in only two approved EXE courses at the 500 level (e.g., EXE 500, EXE 501). Pre-majors must reapply for admission as majors by submitting a change of major form to the Graduate School during or after the completion of two EXE courses. Pre-majors are not guaranteed admission to the program. At the point of admission to the major, candidates must have a 3.0 GPA and a grade of B or higher in each of the courses completed as a pre-major.

The Exceptional Education Department may determine a new applicant falls under the guidelines for "pre-major status" in the Graduate programs. The status has been established by the Faculty of the Exceptional Education Department for two purposes:

1. To admit students who show the greatest promise of being successful in graduate coursework.
2. To admit students who demonstrate the potential to be successful teaching individuals with disabilities.

The following regulations apply to individuals assigned to pre-major status:

1. Pre-majors with certification in an approved area may enroll in a maximum of only two courses (by advisement) before reapplying for admission to the major. Six hours of graduate course work taken as a pre-major is potentially applicable to a master's degree program. Pre-majors who follow the advisement sequence for the program of their choice can anticipate that all coursework will be accepted into the master's program. *Please note: Students (even with certification in an approved area) may not enroll in more than six credit hours of graduate coursework while in pre-major status.*
2. Pre-majors may not register for courses that are restricted to "majors only" during the initial registration period. Degree students have priority registration. Therefore, pre-majors should expect to register for courses on a space-available basis. Courses identified as "Majors Only" in the Master Schedule are not generally available to pre-majors until the Final Registration Period.
3. All practica (student teaching) and other field work experiences (e.g., internships) are closed to pre-majors.

4. A Master's degree program MAY NOT be completed by a student in pre-major status, nor may Pre-majors enroll in EXE 684. Until students have provided evidence of an initial certificate in students with disabilities, they may not expect to advance through the program.
5. There is no "waiting list" for admission to the Exceptional Education Department. Pre-majors will need to reapply for admission to the major, after the completion of 6 credit hours with a minimum earned grade of "B" in each course.
6. Pre-majors must complete a Change of Major Form while enrolled in their second Exceptional Education class. This form must be submitted to the Graduate School (GC 204). Deadlines are the same as those for matriculated status. The department makes decisions regarding a change to major status after semester grades are posted.
7. Pre-majors must earn at least a grade of B (B=3.0) in each class taken as a pre-major be considered for matriculated status. Other admission criteria apply.
8. Financial aid (e.g., TAP, NDSL, and work study) may not be available for pre-major students. For additional information, students should contact the Financial Aid Office, Moot Hall 230, at 716-878-4902.

Change of Major

Students wishing to transfer from one degree curriculum to another must apply to the new degree program in accordance with established deadline dates and current readmission requirements.

Those seeking to change majors should:

1. Apply for the new degree program online through the Graduate School website: <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/apply>.
2. In addition, if you didn't previously apply for admission to a program in the Exceptional Education Department, you must complete the departmental supplemental application materials (see above).

Graduate Programs

Individuals are accepted into one of four programs: Early Childhood (EXC), Childhood (XCE), Generalist (EXS), or Bilingual Special Education (BXE). Sequences for each of these programs follow. Please note that each program includes courses classified as "preliminary" and "required" coursework. For the most part, it is anticipated that individuals who already possess initial certification as a Teacher of Special Education will not need to fulfill coursework required under the "Preliminary Courses" section as these courses will typically duplicate those completed in special education for the initial teaching certificate, provided they completed coursework at an accredited institution with an approved program in special education. **Please note: Students who do not have evidence of initial certification in students with disabilities will need to complete preliminary coursework that they have not already completed (e.g., some have completed the equivalent of EXE 500 at the undergraduate level).** All students (e.g., those with and without initial certification in students with disabilities) must complete "required" coursework. Unless otherwise specified, each preliminary and required course is for three (3) credits.

Preliminary Coursework

The preliminary coursework consists of four generic courses in special education and a six credit hour graduate student teaching experience (EXE 504: Graduate Practicum in Special Education).

The graduate practicum will be a full-time student teaching experience in a setting with students with special needs under the supervision of a certified, approved special educator. Details about this requirement can be obtained from the Department's Practicum Coordinator. This offering is available during summer, fall, and spring semesters.

Required Internship

The Early Childhood program and the Adolescence program require completion of EXE 682: Instructional Field Experience in Special Education. Students accepted into the Childhood Program after Summer, 2009 who do not complete EXE 504 as part of their program will also be required to complete EXE 682. The field experience is **not** the same as student teaching and cannot be substituted for student teaching.

Full Time Status and Financial Aid

Information about number of credits required for full time graduate student status is provided by the Graduate School at <http://catalog.buffalostate.edu/graduate/course-load.htm>. The summary statement is as follows:

Aid for Graduate & Postbaccalaureate Students

Eligibility for financial aid is based on many factors including matriculation status, enrollment status, financial need, satisfactory academic progress, and program pursuit. In most cases, a student must be enrolled at least half time (6 credits) in courses that are part of his/her degree program to be eligible for financial aid. To receive TAP, students must be enrolled in an approved program and be full time (12 credits or 9 credits if student has a graduate assistantship).

Early Childhood Special Education Program (EXC)

This program prepares early interventionists and teachers to work with infants and young children with disabilities—or young children at-risk for being identified—and their families. The program is cross-categorical; prospective teachers receive coursework relative to working with students with physical, intellectual, sensory, communication, and/or behavioral disabilities. The role of the early interventionist or preschool teacher is to facilitate the child's development of social, motor, communication, self-help, cognitive, and behavioral skills. In addition, interventionists are expected to design activities and environments to enhance the child's concept of self, sense of competence and control, and independence. Because a number of educational programs serving this population subscribe to an interdisciplinary approach, much of the assessment, planning, and implementation of programs is done in collaboration with other members of the professional team.

Preliminary Courses:

- EXE 500 Individuals with Special Needs
- EXE 501 Educational Assessment Techniques for Special Education
- EXE 502 Contingency Management
- EXE 504 Graduate Practicum in Special Education (6 credits)

Required Courses:

- EXE 510 Strategies for Cognition & Emergent Literacy in Young Children with Disabilities
- EXE 612 Managing the Behavior of Young Children with Disabilities
- EXE 620 Advanced Methods for Teaching Individuals with Moderate and Severe Disabilities
- EXE 628 Collaboration and Consultative Practices in Inclusive Settings
- EXE 650 Assessment of Young Children with Disabilities

- EXE 652 Intervention in Early Childhood Special Education
- EXE 682 Instructional Field Experience
- EXE 684 Graduate Seminar in Exceptional Education
- EXE 690 Master's Project (3 hours) **OR**
- EXE 695 Master's Thesis (6 hours)

Electives by advisement:

- EXE 530 Parent and Family Involvement in Special Education Programs
- EXE 534 Understanding Students with Behavior Problems in the Classroom
- EXE 544 Models of Classroom Discipline for Students with Disabilities
- EXE 631 Adapting Language Arts and Reading Instruction for Students with Mild Disabilities
- EXE 632 Direct Instruction Intervention Models for Students with Special Needs
- EXE 644 Advanced Behavior Analysis for Challenging Behaviors

Total Hours: without Initial SWD certification = 51 hours; with Initial SWD cert= 30-33 hours

Childhood Program (XCE)

This program prepares special education teachers for delivery of educational services in classrooms with typical students. This program also prepares special education teachers to work closely with general educators in a consultative or collaborative role to help infuse special education practices into the general education class. The coursework in this program is designed to familiarize teachers with curricular expectations and content in general education. It also prepares teachers to make appropriate modifications to the curriculum for students with mild disabilities in general educational settings. The goal of this program is to prepare special educators, working closely with general educators, to provide the best teaching strategies to promote student learning, as well as to design positive environments that foster learning for students both with and without disabilities.

Preliminary Courses:

- EXE 500 Individuals with Special Needs
- EXE 501 Educational Assessment Techniques for Special Education
- EXE 502 Contingency Management
- EXE 503 Instructional Strategies
- EXE 504 Graduate Practicum in Special Education (6 hours)

Required Courses:

- EXE 520 Curriculum for Teaching Individuals with Moderate and Severe Disabilities **OR**
- EXE 620 Advanced Methods for Teaching Individuals with Moderate and Severe Disabilities
- EXE 628 Collaboration and Consultative Practices in Inclusive Settings
- EXE 631 Adapting Language Arts and Reading for Students with Mild Disabilities
- EXE 632 Direct Instruction Intervention Models for Students with Special Needs
- EXE 633 Adapting Content Area Instruction for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities
- EXE 634 Applied Behavior Analysis
- EXE 636 Promoting Effective Social Interaction in the schools
- EXE 682 Instructional Field Experiences (Note: required for students who do not complete EXE 504)
- EXE 684 Graduate Seminar in Exceptional Education
- EXE 690 Master's Project (3 hours) **OR**
- EXE 695 Master's Thesis (6 hours)

Electives by advisement:

- EXE 530 Parent and Family Involvement in Special Education Programs
- EXE 534 Understanding Students with Behavior Problems in the Classroom
- EXE 544 Models of Classroom Discipline for Students with Disabilities
- EXE 627 Transition from School to Adult Community Life

EXE 644 Advanced Behavior Analysis for Challenging Behaviors
EXE 650 Assessment of Young Children with Disabilities
EXE 652 Intervention in Early Childhood Special Education

Total hours: without Initial SWD certification = 51; with Initial SWD cert= 30-33 hours

Special Education: Generalist Program (EXS) and Students with Disabilities Subject Areas Extensions

The Special Education Generalist (7-12) Secondary Programs prepare teachers to work with students with disabilities at the secondary level. The programs are intended to develop highly qualified teachers who possess the knowledge and skills to develop and facilitate effective instruction and programs. Secondary special education teacher candidates are prepared to work collaboratively with general education subject matter specialists, as well as with career education personnel. Graduates of this program become knowledgeable in subject matter content, as well as best practices for transition planning. They also acquire a solid base in the technology of teaching, with knowledge related to direct and interactive instruction (cooperative learning, peer tutoring, differentiated instruction, and responsive instructional strategies).

The programs recognize the unique needs of adolescents with learning difficulties. A major goal of this program is to prepare teachers to address secondary students' skill deficits, social adaptation problems, and vocational competence.

The Special Education Generalist (7-12) Secondary Program leads to a master of science in education degree and eligibility for New York State certification in Students with Disabilities (SWD) Generalist 7-12—pending completion of other certification requirements. The additional SWD Generalist 7-12 with subject extension programs lead to a master of science in education degree and eligibility for New York State certification in SWD Generalist 7-12 as well as 7-12 subject area extensions—pending completion of other certification requirements. The 7-12 subject area extensions to the SWD Generalist 7-12 program are: Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Social Studies, Mathematics, English Language Arts, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Latin, Mandarin, and Urdu.

The candidate designs programs of study with his or her adviser according to the candidate's goals and background. The process will require an analysis of candidate's transcripts. Transcript analysis will include a review of previous courses in accordance with part 80 of the Regulations and Requirements from the Office of Teaching Initiatives will be used to determine if this requirement was met. Recommendation will include a review of the teacher candidate's transcripts to ensure 24 credit hours in the content core requirement have been met. In addition, students pursuing one of the 17 subject area extensions must complete a minimum of 18 semester hours in the chosen subject area. Recommendation will be contingent on upon completion of this requirement. The Student with Disabilities Checklist will be used to document completion of this requirement.

To view the program requirement checklist and/or the list of subject area extensions, visit:

<http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/supplemental-application-materials>

Content Core Requirements*

Must have six credit (semester) hours in each subject area

Math (3)

Math (3)

ELA (3)

ELA (3)

Social Studies (3)

Social Studies (3)

Science (3)

Science (3)

*some or all content core requirements may be met through transcript analysis

Preliminary Courses

0-18 cr

Required for students without provisional/initial certification in students with disabilities 7-12:

EXE 500	Individuals with Special Needs
EXE 501	Educational Assessment Techniques for Special Education
EXE 502	Contingency Management
EXE 503	Instructional Strategies (Foundations)
EXE 504	Graduate Practicum in Special Education (6 hours)

Required Courses

30-33 cr

EXE 520	Curriculum for Individuals with Moderate and Severe Disabilities OR
EXE 620	Advanced Curriculum for Individuals with Moderate and Severe Disabilities
EXE 627	Transition from School to Adult Community Life
EXE 628	Consultation and Collaboration
EXE 631	Adapting Language Arts and Reading Instruction OR
CTE 605	Vocational Guidance for Career Exploration
EXE 632	Direct Instruction Intervention Models for Students with Special Needs
EXE 633	Adapting Content Area Instruction
EXE 634	Applied Behavior Analysis
EXE 682	Instructional Field Experience in Special Education
EXE 684	Graduate Seminar in Exceptional Education
EXE 690	Master's Project (3 hours) OR
EXE 695	Master's Thesis (6 hours)

All courses are 3 credit hours unless otherwise indicated.

Total hours: without Initial SWD certification: 48-72; with SWD certification: 30-33

Bilingual Special Education Certificate of Advanced Study (BXE)

Students who complete the certificate program are eligible for a New York State Bilingual Education Extension. Job opportunities are available for a full range of services to individuals with disabilities. Graduates will be eligible for placements in inclusion settings, resource rooms, self-contained classrooms, and residential services. State certification allows graduates to work with individuals with mild disabilities, from early childhood to adult, in both monolingual and bilingual (Spanish-English) settings.

All students entering the program must:

1. be currently enrolled in one of the Special Education master's programs (i.e., Early Childhood, Childhood, or Generalist), OR
2. be currently enrolled in the Speech and Language program, OR
3. must hold a Master's degree in Special Education.

All courses must be planned with the program adviser.

Required Courses:

- BXE 623 Policies and Practices of Bilingual Education and Bilingual Special Education (3 hrs)
- BXE 625 Curriculum I: Strategies for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Students (3 hrs)
- BXE 626 Assessment Techniques in Bilingual Special Education (3 hrs)
- BXE 627 Curriculum II: Applied Strategies in Bilingual Education (3 hrs)
- BXE 628 Bilingual Special Education Field Practicum (6 hrs)

Total: 18 credits

Graduate Assistantships

Assistantships may be available if faculty members have been awarded federal or state grants. Generally, such assistantships would be directly tied to enrollment in a specific program. Assistantships within the Exceptional Education Department, as well as in other departments on campus, are options for students. Information about college-wide assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships can be found on the Buffalo State College Graduate School website at: <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/assistantships>.

Full-time Study

In order to apply for a Graduate Assistantship, a student must be enrolled for full-time study at Buffalo State College. The maximum course load for graduate assistants will vary according to assignment. Normally, the maximum course load for graduate assistants is nine (9) credit hours per semester. Responsibility for approving specific maximum course loads rests with the student, the adviser, and the director of the grant funding the assistantship.

Tuition Waiver

Graduate assistantships will generally include a tuition waiver for nine hours of graduate coursework every semester. If a student is enrolled in nine (9) hours of course work, tuition for nine (9) hours will be waived; students who are enrolled in twelve (12) hours will need to pay tuition for one three (3) credit hour course. If this tuition waiver is related to a grant funding source, then it may be possible to pay for an additional three credit course from that specific grant.

Duties of Graduate Assistants

Duties of graduate assistants vary and consist of non-teaching functions such as monitoring exams, assisting in administrative assignments, or participating in library or field research projects. Graduate assistants can work from 12-20 hours per week and receive stipends, in addition to the tuition waiver. In the case of grant-related assistantships, the amount of the stipend and the related duties will be defined by the parameters of that specific grant.

Non-matriculated Students or Students Not Yet Admitted to the Exceptional Education Department May Apply

It is not essential that applicants for graduate assistantships be accepted as majors into the

department when they apply. Graduate assistants who meet minimum requirements for admission will typically be accepted for admission to the department during the next admission period.

Applications

Applications for graduate assistantships are available in the office of the Department Chair, Ketchum 202, and from the Graduate School, in Grover Cleveland 204. Visit the Graduate School website at <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/assistantships> for general information on college-wide assistantship opportunities. The link entitled: “Employment web page” connects directly to the assistantship opportunities for graduate students throughout Buffalo State College.

Graduate Advisement

The importance of working with an academic adviser cannot be overstated. Degree and certification requirements can be very confusing; students who attempt to self-advise may make mistakes that cost both time and money. Graduate students are not required to be advised prior to online registration; nonetheless, students should see their adviser regularly. ***Students should note that selected courses in some programs are offered only one semester per year. Advisors have this information available for their advisees.*** The following information will be helpful as students begin (or continue) their graduate coursework in the Exceptional Education Department at Buffalo State College.

Graduate students are expected to assume major responsibility for the completion of appropriate requirements in their program in Exceptional Education at Buffalo State College. Each student (whether assigned to Exceptional Education pre-major status or accepted as an Exceptional Education major) will be assigned an academic adviser upon admission. Pre-majors are typically assigned to the same adviser, currently the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. Majors are assigned to their advisers on the basis of their choice of program. Students are notified in writing of their adviser’s name, office location, e-mail address, and phone number. Meeting with their adviser regularly, clarifying program requirements, developing a plan, and monitoring and adjusting that plan over subsequent semesters will allow students to complete their degree in a timely manner. One of the major responsibilities students complete with their advisers is the Candidacy Form. See Appendix A of this *Handbook* for an explanation of the Candidacy Form completion process.

Advisers usually post office hours on their doors within the first few weeks of every Fall and Spring semester, in addition, the department secretaries have copies of each faculty member’s office hours. Students should make an appointment to see their adviser at least two times a year in a professional and timely manner, well in advance of the pre-registration period. Failure to make an appointment well in advance may result in having to register later than the date and time the student anticipated.

Appointments can be made by contacting the adviser directly via phone or e-mail, or stopping by his/her office during office hours. Most advisers hold extended office hours in the weeks before pre-registration; students can sign up for a time that is convenient via posted advisement sign-up sheets, or other means specified by their advisers. Students who are unable to contact their

adviser after one attempt should leave a written message, voicemail, or e-mail with their name, number, and times during the day when they can be reached; and ask the adviser to contact them. Given busy faculty schedules, students should be aware that it may take up to five business days before the adviser responds. Students who have not had a response should try to contact their adviser again. Remember, faculty are academic employees and may not be readily available during school breaks and/or during the summer session unless they are teaching summer courses. Please allow extra time during these periods for faculty to respond to inquiries.

Students should prepare for their advisement session by reviewing this handbook, the *Graduate Catalog*, and the master schedule for the upcoming semester. Students should have some tentative courses in mind. Generally, advisers will not assist students in the development of a specific schedule for the semester. It is the student's responsibility to develop a schedule that reflects the adviser's recommendations and takes unique personal, family, and employment factors into consideration.

Students who experience difficulty contacting their adviser or who believe their adviser is not providing accurate, timely information may request a change of adviser. The form to change advisers is available in KH 204. Concerns about an adviser can also be brought to the Exceptional Education Department Chair in KH 202. Please do not simply go to another faculty member and request advisement – for many reasons, that can create problems for students as well as for faculty. All requests are not guaranteed; they will be reviewed by the Department Chair or Associate Chair.

Policies for the Exceptional Education Department and the Graduate School

Practica: EXE 504 and EXE 682

There is a prescribed sequence for completing courses in the major. Prerequisite courses need to be completed before more advanced coursework may be taken. Courses offered by the department that are field-based require that students apply for permission to enroll at least one semester in advance (EXE 504, EXE 682). Applications can be picked up in Ketchum 202 and returned by the deadline. Deadlines are **September 15** for **Spring** and **February 15** for **Summer and Fall**. It is *each student's responsibility* to obtain information about these practica well in advance of registration for these courses. In addition to completing an application for EXE 504, students must have an approved Candidacy Form prior to registering for EXE 504.

The Exceptional Education Department Practicum Coordinator is responsible for making placements for students in the practica. Students should contact the Practicum Coordinator should they need additional information regarding practica that their adviser is unable to provide. In addition, the Exceptional Education Department has developed the *Student Teaching Handbook for Undergraduate and Graduate Students in Exceptional Education*, which provides essential information and addresses critical issues associated with practicum. The handbook is available online at the department's Blackboard site, and should be read prior to the student teaching orientation session. Students must abide by all the policies specified in this handbook. Graduate practicum courses may not be transferred in from other institutions. All practicum courses required for the completion of the Master's Degree need to be taken at Buffalo State College under the supervision of faculty members of the Exceptional Education Department.

Application for Admission to Candidacy

Every matriculated graduate student at Buffalo State College is **required to file an application for admission to candidacy after the completion of at least six (6) but not more than twelve (12) credit hours** of graduate coursework at Buffalo State College. This application must be completed in consultation with the adviser. It is the responsibility of the student to contact his/her adviser and set up the appointment to complete the candidacy form. Students and faculty must adhere to the following requirements:

1. File an application to candidacy after 6 credits but no more than 12 credits have been completed with a 3.0 GPA.
2. Include any preliminary courses, as needed, and all required courses and electives. An application to candidacy may not include any courses with "I" or "E" grades or any grade less than a "C" (C = 2.0).
3. Make sure the application lists at least 30 credits, at least 15 of which are at the 600 level.
4. Make sure all writing is legible.
5. Course numbers and abbreviations of course titles for electives as well as for required courses should be entered in appropriate areas on the candidacy forms.
6. Students can transfer credits in from another college or university or have some courses waived, with the approval of their advisers. Information on both of these topics is presented below. Official course numbers and course titles must be identified for courses which will be transferred from other institutions. Completed courses which will be transferred into the graduate program at Buffalo State College must be verified on an official transcript which should be forwarded to the Graduate School.
7. Attach a copy of teacher certification in an approved area (i.e., special education; early childhood education; childhood education; elementary education; or secondary education [mathematics, science, English, foreign language, or social studies]).
8. Each student must complete a disposition self-evaluation questionnaire on TaskStream **BEFORE** completing their candidacy form. **AFTER** a student meets with his/her advisor to complete the candidacy form, the advisor is required to evaluate the advisee's disposition on TaskStream before submitting the completed candidacy form to the department secretary.
9. Both the student and the adviser must sign the application to candidacy and then submit it to the department secretary in KH 204.

An application to candidacy must be approved by the Department Chair or Associate Chair of Graduate Studies before it is official. A candidacy not approved at the department level will be returned to the adviser with a rationale. The adviser will contact the student, address the problem, and re-submit the form. After the candidacy form has been approved at all levels (adviser, department, and chair), a copy is kept in the student's department file. These forms help students ensure that any "new" requirements in the department and/or college may not be imposed upon a student whose program is already approved and in progress. *Completing candidacy forms in a timely fashion will give students pre-registration priority over students who have not yet filed for candidacy.* Students who do not submit an application to candidacy by the time they have completed 12 credits may be prevented from registering for additional coursework.

Students who want to change a course that has been listed on the candidacy form will need to obtain the permission of the faculty adviser and submit a "**Request for Change in Candidacy**" form, available in Ketchum Hall 202. Again, the approval of the faculty adviser and a number of signatures are required before the change will actually take place on the student's candidacy. Details on this procedure are provided in Appendix A of this *Handbook*.

Grade Requirements

Students must maintain at least a B (3.0) grade point average on all graduate work. No grade lower than "C" is acceptable in any required course. Students who earn a grade less than a C (C=2.0) in a course listed on the candidacy will need to either repeat the course or file a change of candidacy, deleting the original course and adding a reasonable substitute. If no reasonable substitute can be found, then the student may be unable to finish his/her master's degree in Exceptional Education. Graduate students who earn a "C-" grade (or lower) in a required course can repeat the course.² (Conditions governing the repeating of practicum courses are different and are explained in the *Student Teaching Handbook for Undergraduate and Graduate Students in Exceptional Education*.)

Application for EXE 684: Seminar and EXE 690: Master's Project

Master's degree candidates in the Exceptional Education Department at Buffalo State College are required to fulfill a culminating research experience. Students complete EXE 684 and either EXE 690 or EXE 695 to meet this requirement. Typically, EXE 684 is completed during the student's second-to-last semester of study, and EXE 690 is completed during the last semester of study.

All students must take EXE 684: Seminar as a prerequisite to the Master's project, and this typically takes place during the second last semester of study; depending upon the student's program, these courses may be taken with additional course requirements, which remain to be completed. **Students wishing to enroll in EXE 684 are required to apply in advance, and must, at the time application is being made, have an approved candidacy form on file in the department and either have successful completion of EXE 504 or submit an initial students with disabilities certificate, in their program area, issued by the New York State Education Department.** Applications can be picked up and returned to KH 202, along with a copy of the initial certificate in special education, in advance of or at the deadline. The deadline dates for applying for EXE 684 are:

² Policy regarding repeating courses: Repeating Courses

A student may repeat a given course once for which a C-, D+, D, or E grade was earned. The repeated course must have the same prefix, number, title, and credit. The repeated course must be taken at Buffalo State. Only the passing grade and those credit hours completed will be used to calculate the GPA. Graduate students may repeat a maximum of two courses of the total degree program.

All grades remain on the permanent record. A passing grade will not replace a U grade, since the U is not computed in the GPA. Courses with letter grades A through C cannot be repeated. Illegally repeated courses are not used to calculate the cumulative GPA.

Repeating courses affects financial aid. Contact the Financial Aid Office for the current policy.

Once a student has completed a master's degree or certificate of advanced study, a final average for that degree or certificate is computed. Courses for that degree or certificate may not be repeated, and that final average is not affected by any subsequent coursework completed at Buffalo State.

March 1 for Fall enrollment
October 1 for Spring enrollment
(EXE 684 and EXE 690 typically are not offered during the summer.)

The number of sections of EXE 684 is carefully monitored based on the number of applications submitted by the due date. Students who submit late applications will be placed on a waiting list with no guarantee of enrollment. Thus, they may not be able to complete degree requirements under the timeline they had anticipated.

Students are responsible for outlining on the EXE 684 application how they will complete remaining coursework so that EXE 684 and EXE 690 are completed during the second-to-last and last semesters of study respectively. **Approval to enroll in EXE 684 requires students to have an approved candidacy form on file in the department and either have successful completion of EXE 504 or an initial certificate in special education issued by the New York State Department of Education.** All applications are reviewed and must be approved by the department before a student will be given special permission to enroll in EXE 684 via the Banner registration system. Each student approved for EXE 684 will receive a letter providing information about registering for EXE 684 (e.g., name of instructor, time course is to be offered, etc.) in time to register via Banner for the correct section. If, due to change in circumstances, a student is unable to take EXE 684 as planned, timely notification to the department is requested.

Approval of the EXE 684 application and subsequent satisfactory performance assure students are eligible for EXE 690. The Associate Chair for Graduate Programs, along with the department's secretarial staff, are responsible for notifying students that they have received permission to enroll in EXE 690 the next semester.

Students in the Exceptional Education Department have the option of completing EXE 690: Master's Project or EXE 695: Master's Thesis. Because the EXE 690 is three credit hours as opposed to 6 credit hours for the EXE 695, and because EXE 690 may be done in pairs or triads, most, if not all, students at the present time are choosing the EXE 690 option.

The culminating research experience is generally the last course students complete in their master's degree programs. **Students in the Exceptional Education Department must complete EXE 684 and EXE 690 at Buffalo State College. Students *may not* transfer in credits from another institution to satisfy these requirements.**

Application for Graduation

When students are in the final semester of their graduate program, they must *file for graduation* – even if they are unsure whether or not they will actually attend the graduate ceremony. The form to be completed is available at <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/graduation>. Applications for the master's degrees diploma, as well as for graduation, need to be completed in order for students to be awarded degrees. The deadlines for filing for master's degrees are

December graduation: October 1
May graduation: February 1
August graduation: June 1

While there are three graduation periods during the year, there is only one graduation ceremony, which is held annually in May. *Students who plan to attend graduation ceremonies need to submit their names in advance and order appropriate attire through Barnes and Noble at Buffalo State Bookstore.* The Graduate School, via information posted at the graduate website, can be very helpful with information related to these areas or can refer students to the appropriate office(s).

Continuous Enrollment

(As per the Graduate School website): Students must register for and complete at least one graduate course within four academic semesters (fall/spring) or they will be dropped from the program and must apply for readmission. Reapplication must be made in accordance with the established deadline dates and current admission requirements. Students must be readmitted to the college and the department in order to be able to register for, and resume, coursework.

See the Graduate Catalog <http://catalog.buffalostate.edu/graduate/> for more information about this policy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Waiver of Course/s

Q. Is it possible to have required courses in my Master's Degree program waived?

A. Perhaps. If students have completed an equivalent course in their undergraduate work or at the graduate level at another institution with an approved teacher preparation program in special education/Students with Disabilities, one or more preliminary courses may be waived. Please consult your adviser to determine if courses previously completed are equivalent to required courses in your graduate program at Buffalo State College. Courses in your required program of study may not be substituted for equivalent courses taken at the undergraduate level.

Q. How can I determine whether a course may be waived?

A. You should bring your course syllabus, the textbook used, and/or a copy of the course description in the college catalog from the institution which you attended to your adviser to determine whether any courses you took previously are equivalent to courses required in the graduate program in Exceptional Education at Buffalo State College.

In the event your adviser is unable to make that determination, he or she will consult with one or more faculty members who typically teach the course that is similar to the one(s) you have taken. You may be asked to meet with the faculty member(s) reviewing your request. After the faculty member(s) evaluate(s) the course, your adviser will make their recommendation to the department. Once a determination is made at the department level, your adviser will inform you as to whether or not your request to have a course waived was approved.

Q. Will I get course credit if I have one or more courses waived?

A. No. If a course is waived, you will not receive credit for the course, but it may reduce the total number of courses you will be required to complete in your master's program. Keep in mind that students must complete no fewer than (30) credit hours in order to receive a master's degree at Buffalo State College, regardless of the number of courses that have been waived.

Q. If I suspect an undergraduate course might be equivalent to a graduate course in my program of study, what should I do?

A. All students planning to enroll in graduate course work in the Exceptional Education Department should consult with an adviser to avoid taking courses that are equivalent to coursework taken previously. Students should keep in mind that you can't get graduate credit for courses that are considered to be equivalents of courses taken at the undergraduate level. Always consult your adviser regarding this particular situation. The most frequent occurrence of this is an undergraduate introductory special education course, which is considered to be the equivalent of EXE 500, but other courses might also need to be evaluated.

Candidacy Forms

Q. When should an "Application for Admission to Candidacy" be completed?

A. When a matriculated student has completed between six (6) and twelve (12) credit hours of graduate coursework at Buffalo State College. It is the student's responsibility to contact their adviser to schedule a time to complete the form, and also complete the TaskStream

requirement at Transition Point 2 to ensure the candidacy form can be processed. See Appendix A for more information about TaskStream.

Q. Are there certain conditions that must be met in order for my "Application for Admission to Candidacy" form to be approved?

A. Students must meet the following requirements if an application for admission to candidacy is to be approved:

1. Complete at least six (6) credit hours of graduate coursework at this college.
2. Individuals applying for candidacy must meet all program requirements as outlined in advisement material and approved by the faculty adviser.
3. Maintain at least a B (3.0) grade point average on all graduate work. No grade lower than "C" is acceptable.
4. Identify all courses (including preliminary courses and electives) which will be required in the master's degree program by course number and course title, and include projected semester when each course will be completed.
5. No "I", "N", or "X" grades may be listed.
6. Attach a copy of a teaching certificate in an approved area.
7. Course numbers and abbreviations of course titles for all courses must be entered in appropriate areas.
8. Courses which will be transferred into the graduate program at Buffalo State College that have already been completed must be verified on an official transcript, which should have been forwarded to the Graduate School when the course was completed. Official courses numbers and course titles must be identified for courses that will be transferred from other institutions.
9. All students must complete a disposition self-evaluation questionnaire on TaskStream BEFORE completing their candidacy form (Transition Point 2). AFTER a student meets with their adviser to complete their candidacy form, advisers are required to evaluate advisee's disposition on TaskStream before submitting the completed candidacy form to the department secretary.
10. Both the student and the adviser must sign the application to candidacy, before submitting it to the department secretary in KH 204.

Q. How many graduate courses may I transfer into my graduate program at Buffalo State College?

A. As per the Graduate Catalog, pg. 8, *"There is no automatic transfer of credit toward a graduate degree or certificate of advanced study. A maximum of 12 graduate-level credit hours of transfer work from an approved regionally or nationally accredited institution may be applied to a degree program or certificate of advanced study upon departmental/adviser approval. Academic departments reserve the right to allow fewer transfer credits. The applicability of transfer credit to a graduate certificate program is determined by the department."*

In advance of taking a course at another institution of higher education, work closely with your adviser to make sure that the course will either be an acceptable equivalent of a required course or be suitable as an elective, if your program includes an option for an elective.

See the Graduate Catalog for additional information,

<http://www.buffalostate.edu/graduateschool/graduatecatalog.xml>

Note: You may not transfer credits for a practicum course or Master's Thesis/Culminating Project/Seminar from another institution.

Change in Candidacy

Q. Can I substitute a course for another course listed on my candidacy after I have submitted my candidacy forms?

A. Perhaps. Completion of a "Request for a Change in Candidacy" form, which requires the signature of your adviser, is needed. This form is also needed if a course is eliminated from your program.

Q. When should I submit the Change in Candidacy form?

A. As per the *Graduate Catalog*, the policy for changing your candidacy form is as follows:

- Changes to Approved Degree Candidacy
- Once the candidacy form has been approved, changes can be made only with approval of the student's adviser, department chair, and school dean.
- Change forms are available in department office.

Seek the approval of your adviser before registering for a course that does not appear on your candidacy. Please do not file the change until you have actually registered for the course(s) you wish to substitute. This step will eliminate unnecessary paperwork in the event that the course is closed, preventing you from registering for it. However, do not postpone filing a change in candidacy.

Additional Applications for Other Coursework in the Graduate Program

Q. Are there any courses for which students must apply in the program in Exceptional Education?

A. Yes. Individuals planning to complete practica and research must complete forms requesting permission to enroll in those courses at least a semester in advance. Deadlines for the applications are provided on pg. 3 of this handbook.

Courses for which students must apply are:

- EXE 504: Graduate Practicum (if not already certified in Special Education)
- EXE 682: Instructional Field Experience in Special Education
- EXE 684: Research Seminar

Questions regarding practica may be addressed to faculty advisers. In the event that advisers are unable to provide requested information, students should contact the Associate Chair of Graduate Programs of the Exceptional Education Department, KH 204D (878-5321).

Q. May I complete a practicum course elsewhere and transfer the credit?

A. NO. Practicum courses required for degree completion must be completed at Buffalo State College under the supervision of a faculty member in the Exceptional Education Department.

Q: Must students apply for EXE 684: Research Seminar and EXE 690 Master's Project?

A. Yes. Students must complete EXE 684 request forms by the appropriate deadline dates (**March 1st for the Fall Semester; October 1st for the Spring Semester**). Applications are available outside Ketchum Hall 202. EXE 684 and EXE 690 **are not** offered during the Summer. Approval of the EXE 684 application and subsequent satisfactory performance will assure eligibility for enrollment in EXE 690. All students enrolled in 690 must also complete TaskStream Transition Point 4 as part of course and program requirements.

Q. May I complete any part of the culminating project at another college or university?

A. **NO.** EXE 684, EXE 690 (or EXE 695) must be completed at Buffalo State College under the supervision of a professor in the Department.

Requirements for Graduation**Q. How long do I have to finish my degree?**

A. You have **six years** to complete **degree** requirements; however, changing certification regulations may mean you need to complete a master's degree more quickly. Each student's circumstance is unique, so be prepared to develop (with your adviser) your own course planning in line with your own situation. Much information about the certification process is available on-line at <http://www.buffalostate.edu/teachercertification> or phone at 716-878-6121.

Q. What if I am not done after six years?

A. Should your program extend beyond the six year timeframe, a form for waiver of the six year timeframe must be completed and approved, in order for the degree to be granted. This form is available at <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/approval-waiver-six-year-time-limit>

Q. Must I complete a separate application for graduation (and your diploma) in advance of my completion of my Graduate Program?

A. **Yes.** The semester before you intend to graduate, make sure to complete an "Application for Graduation" and submit it to the Graduate School before the deadline listed in the Graduate Master Schedule. Detailed information about applying for your diploma and graduation is available at <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/graduation>.

Q. How will I obtain my teaching certificate?

A. Apply for your teaching certificate through the college by contacting our campus Teacher Certification Office, <http://teachercertification.buffalostate.edu/> (716-878-6121). To be recommended for certification through the Buffalo State College Teacher Certification Office *students must complete their entire master's degree program, and meet other requirements listed on the Teacher Certification Office website*. If you plan to apply for certification through an alternate route, contact the New York State Education Department or your regional BOCES Teacher Certification Office.

Q. I plan to apply for my Students With Disabilities (SWD) Certification prior to completion of my master's degree. How do I do this?

A. Please contact your local BOCES office for information about applying through the alternative

transcript evaluation certification pathway. Faculty in the EXE department are not permitted to provide information about applying for certification via this route, because the requirements and process for this are outside of our purview.

Q. I am a student enrolled in the SWD 1-6 master's program, and I'd like to extend my certification down to B-2 or up to 7-12. How do I do this?

A. Please contact your local BOCES office for information about applying through the alternative transcript evaluation certification pathway offered by NYSED. Faculty in the EXE department are not permitted to provide information about applying for certification via this route because the requirements and process for this are completely outside of our purview. Please be aware this can be a complex and time consuming process, of which the control and timeline are completed outside of your graduate program requirements We cannot guarantee the acceptability of any courses by NYSED outside of what is outlined in our master's degree programs.



APPENDIX A

Exceptional Education Department Graduate Student Handbook:

Critical Information to Know to Ensure A Successful Experience at Buffalo State College

Support resources:

https://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/9.1_Older_Versions/9.1_SP_14/StudentBanner - bannerhelp@buffalostate.edu or (716) 878-4811

[Computing Help Desk](mailto:chd@buffalostate.edu) - chd@buffalostate.edu - located in E. H. Butler Library reference area (716) 878-HELP (4357) Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

[Information Commons](http://ic.buffalostate.edu) - <http://ic.buffalostate.edu>

Departmental Practices

Anonymous Course Evaluations: How Are They Used?

Students often ask, “Does anything happen to the evaluations? Does anyone review them?” The answer to both questions is yes; evaluations serve an important feedback process for all faculty in the department, but especially so for faculty members who are untenured.

It is the practice, at Buffalo State College, for instructors to offer students an opportunity to evaluate instruction anonymously, at the end of the semester. While there is no institution-wide evaluation survey, many instructors in the Exceptional Education Department use a standard 16-question form developed some years ago by a School-wide committee.

The anonymous course evaluation information is collected at the end of the semester by an impartial individual (often a student in the course) and turned in to the Department office. The scanning of the forms is completed by the Department staff, with no involvement by the instructor. A summary of the evaluation results are reviewed by the Department Chairperson, and (after grades for the semester have been submitted) returned to the instructor for consideration. There is a conscious effort made to ensure there is no connection between student feedback about a course and student grades.

In the case of all untenured faculty members, as well as those applying for promotion, the summary course evaluations are incorporated into a portfolio that is incorporated into review procedures. When narrative texts accompany the numerical summary, those are also provided to review committees. All faculty members are strongly encouraged to submit annual reports; “Teaching Effectiveness” is the first section of the annual report, generally incorporating not only the data provided in the evaluations, but discussion of how the evaluation feedback was addressed in course improvement.

Use of TaskStream for NCATE artifacts

TaskStream, an electronic repository for student projects, is used in the Graduate Programs of the Exceptional Education Department for 6-8 student projects (referred to as “artifacts”) in each program (e.g., Early Childhood, Childhood, and Generalist). It is likely that during your graduate coursework, you will be asked to submit your work both within Task Stream and in another format (either hard copy, or via e-mail) to your professor. Details regarding accessing TaskStream are included at the end of this handbook. There is no cost to make use of TaskStream.

In order for the Exceptional Education Department to be able to evaluate its own effectiveness in preparing students for teaching careers, faculty are responsible for carefully creating assignments, and summarizing the results of student performance on the assignments selected as “artifacts.” The Department’s Assessment Committee is responsible for evaluating the results obtained from these artifacts, and working with the members of the Department to consider ways to improve its programs. Students assist in this process by posting their work, when requested to do so, in a timely way. As often this request takes place at the end of the semester, and involves a culminating project, it is difficult for faculty to communicate with students after the end of the term. Student pro-active cooperation with this on-going work of the Department enables the

essential NCATE-related activities to take place.

The NCATE web site, www.ncate.org, provides information on the accreditation process.

Use of the Teacher Education Unit Conceptual Framework at Buffalo State

One of the in-depth reflections of the formalized consideration of undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation program is the Teacher Education Unit's Conceptual Framework. The graphic, appearing on page 1 of this *Handbook* integrates the following key elements, as per the Teacher Education Unit web page, <http://epp.buffalostate.edu/conceptual-framework>

The Key Elements

CONTENT - the subject matter or content to be taught to the learners.

LEARNER - strong emphasis on professional education candidates attaining an understanding of P-12 learners' socialization, growth, and development; the learning process; reflection of teaching; and the establishment of a classroom climate that facilitates learning.

PEDAGOGY - the strategies that candidates use to teach all learners.

TECHNOLOGY - a vehicle for learners to acquire information, practice skills, use higher order thinking skills, and participate in collaborative projects.

REFLECTION – ability to reflect and assess one's own effectiveness, and to systematically make adjustments to improve and strengthen areas needing attention.

DIVERSITY - the ability of candidates to be aware of and sensitive to diversity issues and to use culturally and socially responsive pedagogy.

DISPOSITIONS – demonstration of respect for learner differences, commitment to own personal growth, and engagement in short and long-term planning.

Each syllabus used in the Exceptional Education Department, and throughout the Teacher Education courses at Buffalo State, includes both this graphic, and a discussion of how the elements correspond to aspects of the specific course. During site visits to campus, the members of the NCATE Board of Examiners meet with students to discuss their programs; often, the Conceptual Framework is part of this discussion. As such, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with it, and consider it to be a part of their own paradigms for learning throughout their graduate teacher preparation experience.

Use of Blackboard

The Blackboard courseware system, which enables instructors and students to communicate and share files related to courses is used by Buffalo State College, and available to students and faculty free of charge. For students unfamiliar with Blackboard, there are resources available online at http://en-us.help.blackboard.com/Learn/9.1_Older_Versions/9.1_SP_14/Student

Within several weeks of being accepted as a matriculated graduate student, a Blackboard account

is established for students. Upon logging on to Blackboard, students will see options for some, if not all, of the courses in which they are enrolled for the upcoming semester. Instructors may use one or more of the following features of Blackboard during the semester:

- Posting course documents (e.g., syllabus, Power Points, course notes, course assignments, exemplars)
- Discussion forums (e.g., required postings, optional discussions)
- Polls or quizzes
- Grades (including use of “grade book” which illustrates the course grade as of a particular point in the semester, grades for particular assignments)
- Communication (with other students in class or with the instructor)
- Attendance

At the start of the semester, each instructor will clarify use of Blackboard in the particular course.

Attendance policies

Instructors are obligated to indicate in the syllabus the attendance policy for each course. This may include designating points for class sessions attended, points deducted for tardiness or early departure. If instructors request information regarding class sessions missed (e.g., doctor’s note or other forms of documentation of events), the request will appear in the syllabus.

Types of courses offered within the department

Departmental graduate courses typically are offered weekly during the fall and spring semesters, and more periodically during the summer sessions. Courses are typically one of the following formats:

- Weekly meetings, using Blackboard to supplement class sessions
 - Usual class meeting time is Mon-Thur 4:30-7:10 or 6:00-8:40 pm; or Sat 9:00-11:40 or 12:00-2:40
- Mixed hybrid, with some sessions on campus, others on-line
- On-line exclusively

Calendar used for start/stop of the semester and holidays

The calendar of the course follows the Academic Calendar of the college, in terms of days when classes are in session. The two-year Academic Calendar can be found at:

<http://suny.buffalostate.edu/academic-calendar>

Use of the APA format within the Exceptional Education Department

All faculty members in the Exceptional Education Department make use of the same format for paper formats, and citations: the American Psychological Association’s format. At this link on the Buffalo State College web site, a short handout is available for free highlighting the most commonly-used practices and how they are addressed within the APA style:

<http://bsclib01.buffalostate.edu/library/docs/apa.pdf>

At the Information Commons reference desk, a copy of the most current edition of Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition is available for questions not covered in the on-line guide.

You can also use the direct link directly to APA, which includes a tutorial on use of APA <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx> as well as Frequently Asked Questions: <http://www.apastyle.org/apa-style-help.aspx>. Also see “Departmental Resources, APA Seminar” in this document.

Taking Action: What Can Be Done In Terms Of The Following?

Problem getting into a section of a course that is closed:

Most courses have electronic waiting lists in Banner. These lists allow you to get “in line” for a course that has filled. If a spot opens in the class, you will receive an email via your Buffalo State Gmail account. You will have limited time to register for the course once the email is sent. If you do not register in time, you may lose the spot. Therefore, it is important to check your email regularly. For more information on waiting lists, please check information via the following link: <http://registrar.buffalostate.edu/sites/registrar.buffalostate.edu/files/uploads/Documents/WaitlistingStu.pdf>

Having an outstanding instructor in a course

At the end of the semester, students and faculty have crossed the finish line for the semester, and often do not think back on their semester. However, if an instructor in a course was particularly excellent, it is very much welcomed if the instructor’s efforts are acknowledged. One option is to write directly to the instructor. Another is to write to the Department Chairperson. A habit of recognizing excellence is one that teachers seek to cultivate in themselves in relation to their students – it is a worthwhile habit to develop during the teacher preparation program.

Having a problem in a course

If you perceive a problem experience in a course you are encouraged to discuss the concern directly with the course instructor. If, after conferencing with the instructor, you are not satisfied with the how the concern was addressed, it is recommended that you share your views with the Department Chairperson. Instructors and students will be advised by the Department Chair about concerns in a way that protects students’ anonymity. Feedback should also be provided at the end of, or during, the semester. The Department Chair will take feedback under advisement.

Participation in review of faculty members applying for renewal or promotion

Faculty in the Exceptional Education Department participate in personnel reviews if they (1) have a term appointment, and are being considered for renewal, (2) have a term appointment, and are being considered for continuing appointment (tenure), or (3) have tenure, and are applying for promotion (usually from associate professor to professor). These reviews are conducted by the department’s Professional Welfare Committee, and serve as the basis for faculty personnel actions ultimately involving actions by the Department Chairperson, Dean of the School of Education,

Provost, and the college's President.

It is the practice of the Exceptional Education Department to announce opportunities for feedback when members of the department faculty are being considered for reappointment, continuing appointment (tenure) or promotion. Feedback can be in one of two forms: a signed letter, addressed to the chair of the Professional Welfare Committee, which becomes part of the portfolio of the faculty member who is the focus of the review, or participation in open hearings conducted by the Professional Welfare Committee. While no anonymous comments are incorporated into the review, no one testifying before the committee is identified by name in the minutes of the open hearings. These minutes become part of the portfolio.

Graduate student input into personnel reviews is highly welcomed, as comments can provide important insights into the faculty member's performance that is not otherwise available. If you have question regarding an upcoming review, please check with the Department office, to obtain the name and contact information for the current chair of the Professional Welfare Committee.

Departmental Resources and Awards

Council for Exceptional Children

The Council for Exceptional Children (or CEC), the pioneering organization serving special educators, parents, and administrators, provides many different resources for graduate students who are members. Journals produced by the organization, including *Exceptional Children* and *Teaching Exceptional Children*, are often used by graduate students as resources for research papers. More specialized journals, the responsibilities of specialized Divisions of CEC, also provide in-depth research on specific topics (e.g., the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (CCBD) Division publishes *Beyond Behavior*, the Division on Learning Disabilities has two publications, *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice* and *Current Practice Alerts*, as does the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities, which offers both ***Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*** and ***Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities***, to its members). More information about the organization, and access to the free blogs about teaching (with different bloggers sharing their insights on the site each month), is available at www.cec.sped.org

The Buffalo State Student Council for Exceptional Children Chapter 117 holds meetings throughout the academic year, many of which take place in the evenings. Information about their meetings can be found on their bulletin board, on the ground level floor of Ketchum Hall. Graduate student participation is welcomed. Students attending meetings do not have to be members of CEC to participate in the meetings.

Resource Guide, the CEC "Red Book"

The Exceptional Education Department, as part of its NCATE accreditation, makes use of the knowledge and skills contained in *What Every Special Educator Must Know: The Standards for the Preparation and Licensure of Special Educators* (7th ed.). This book reflects work that special educators across the country have invested in identifying the precise knowledge and skills which should be incorporated into teacher preparation programs and professional training. The book can be downloaded from the CEC web site: www.cec.sped.org and search "red book."

Exceptional Education Graduate Research Symposium - Learn about EXE 690 projects

At the end of each semester, exceptional education majors completing EXE 690 share their research findings at the Winter and Spring Exceptional Education Graduate Research Symposiums. At each symposium, in addition to a keynote speaker, the morning event provides an overview of the research that has taken place in all sections of EXE 690 during the semester. Small group sessions enable students who are beginning their graduate work to better understand the types of projects that meet the requirements of EXE 690, facilitating a clearer understanding of the capstone sequence of courses in their programs (EXE 684 and EXE 690). Look for information about the symposium, posted throughout Ketchum Hall as well as on the Department's Blackboard web site.

Awards and Scholarships

Information about awards, including scholarships, available to graduate students is listed on the Exceptional Education Department Blackboard website. The information is accessible through a student's Blackboard account. Information about college-wide assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships can be found on the Buffalo State College Graduate School website at: <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/scholarships>

Other Relevant Campus Policies

Academic Misconduct/Plagiarism

The Academic Misconduct policy governing graduate students at Buffalo State College, as per the 2015-2016 *Graduate Catalog* (p. 15) is as follows:

All students are expected to display honesty and integrity in completing course requirements and complying with college academic regulations. Academic misconduct refers to plagiarism or cheating on examinations or assignments and is inconsistent with the aims and goals of Buffalo State. Specifically, students may neither use the work of another individual without proper acknowledgment nor perform work for another individual. Other examples of inappropriate academic conduct include prior acquisition or possession of an examination or submission of false data. As a result of a sustained allegation of academic misconduct, a low or failing grade for part or all of the coursework may be given to the student at the discretion of the instructor. No penalty for an alleged instance of academic misconduct may be imposed unless the student has been apprised of the allegation, the penalty, and the procedures of due process that are available.

A statement outlining formal college policies and procedures to be followed in cases of alleged academic misconduct is on file in each dean's office, the Academic Standards Office, in the Student Life Office and at

<http://bscintra.buffalostate.edu/dops/policysect8/080400.pdf><http://bscintra.buffalostate.edu/dops/policysect8/080400.pdf>

Cases of severe infractions of acceptable standards may be brought before the Academic Misconduct Board, chaired by the director of Academic Standards, and may result in academic dismissal.

Within each course syllabus, a statement regarding academic misconduct, and/or plagiarism, should appear. The process used to address student grievance procedures appears in the *Graduate Catalog*, pages 20-24. Resources are available to students regarding academic

integrity, including the Center for Academic Integrity <http://www.academicintegrity.org/> An excellent resource on plagiarism, that clarifies what is and is not plagiarism via an on-line quiz, can be found at: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>.

Financial Aid

Students may be eligible to receive financial aid to help cover the costs attending graduate school. Types of aid available vary based on student attendance (full or part-time) and degree status. For more information visit: <http://graduateschool.buffalostate.edu/tuition>.

TASKSTREAM

Buffalo State College collects and documents candidate performance in Teacher Education programs using TaskStream. This system also enables faculty and administrators to overall program performance. Constantly reviewing and improving the quality of teacher education programs is essential to the growth, improvement, and continued accreditation of BSC Teacher Education programs by the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

In selected courses you will be required to submit particular assignments via TaskStream. ***These assignments must be submitted via TaskStream. Students failing to submit required assignments via TaskStream will earn an incomplete (I) course grade until the work is completed and (appropriately) submitted.*** All students must be enrolled in their program on TaskStream within 30 days of beginning coursework. All TaskStream required course assignments must be submitted on TaskStream by the end of the course.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you will need to: (1) create a personal user account and (2) enroll in your particular program. An account activation key code and program enrollment code will be provided by your instructor. Once you have created your account and enrolled in your program you will not need to repeat this process; your enrollment will automatically be carried over into subsequent semesters.

If you have used TaskStream in the past, please be sure that your account is still active and that you are enrolled in the correct program. Use the codes that have been provided by your instructor as necessary.

Additional information, including a schedule of webinars designed to guide you through the TaskStream registration and work submission processes, is available from your instructor. For further assistance contact TaskStream at 1-800-311-5656 or online at www.taskstream.com. On-campus support is available at BSCtaskstreamhelp@buffalostate.edu.

Be certain to keep both the account activation key code and the program enrollment codes in a secure spot for future reference. Key codes and program enrollment codes can only be provided by Buffalo State College.