

**Graduate (G) Teacher Education (TE) Candidates  
Special Education (SPED)  
Master's (MA) and Graduate Teacher Certification Program (GTCP)**

Dear Special Education Candidates,

This document includes information regarding your graduate program in Special Education. Please read this document very carefully. If you have any additional questions, please contact

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There are two graduate programs offered in Special Education.

- 1) The Master's degree program (MA) that also prepares candidates for licensure as a special education teacher in the District of Columbia (non-categorical), and
- 2) The Graduate Teacher Certificate Program (GTCP) that prepares candidates for licensure as a special education teacher in the District of Columbia (non-categorical) but not for a graduate degree.

The MA program requires passing a minimum of 36 semester hours of coursework, a comprehensive examination, an Action Research Project, and a second non-thesis option paper in order to be eligible to receive a Master's degree (MA). To receive a license, MA candidates must also apply for licensure, submit passing scores on the PRAXIS I

examinations (Reading, Writing, and Math) and the PRAXIS II examination in the core knowledge of special education.

The GTC Program requires passing a minimum of 30 semester hours of coursework, an Action Research Project, and the PRAXIS II examination in the core knowledge of special education. In order to be licensed as a special education teacher in the District of Columbia (non-categorical), GTCP candidates must also file an application for licensure and pay the required fee.

Each of these programs expects candidates to have completed coursework in normal human development and in classroom management. If these pre-requisites have not been completed, candidates may take them as part of their graduate program of study.

Every candidate must develop an approved program of study in consultation with his/her advisor.

In this document you will find information on

1. *Admission to Teacher Education: Special Education*
2. *PRAXIS tests*
3. *LiveText*
4. *Special Education Field Experiences*
5. *Policies in Teacher Education: Special Education*

Note: Regularly check your CUA E-mail account for important information sent from CUA and the Department of Education.

### **I. Admission to Special Education**

1. There is a rolling admissions policy for submitting all required information necessary for admission to the Special Education program. Applicants must be admitted as degree seeking candidates before being allowed to proceed, however, with the following exception:
 

Those applicants who have not submitted all the required admissions materials and been admitted as a degree seeking candidate by the School of Arts and Sciences, may ask to be allowed to begin taking courses as a non-degree applicant. A non-degree applicant may take one semester's worth of coursework (9 semester hours) while their application is being processed. Once admitted, all coursework taken during this non-degree period may be applied toward the candidate's degree if the candidate's advisor has approved this coursework. Acceptance as a non-degree applicant does not guarantee admission as a degree-seeking candidate, however.
2. Applicants must complete an application form for admission as a degree-seeking candidate, pay the necessary application fee, solicit three letters of recommendation, write a statement of purpose, and submit either verbal and quantitative scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or a score on the Miller Analogies Test (MAT). Applicants who wish only to be licensed as a special education teacher without obtaining a Master's degree (GTCP), must also apply but are required to

submit scores on the PRAXIS I (Reading, Writing, and Math) rather than scores on either the GRE or MAT. All applicants will be asked to present themselves for a personal interview before being recommended for admission to either program (MA or GTCP).

3. As part of the application process, all applicants are requested to complete in LiveText the Candidate Profile Form, the Disposition Survey, and the Technology Survey. The Disposition Survey and Technology Survey ask you to evaluate your own skills and attitudes (self-assessment). These forms are not graded; we simply would like to know a little more about you, your knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
  - a. These forms should be completed during the first semester of coursework. These forms are to be completed in LiveText. You can access these forms in your account by going to the FORMS section under TOOLS. If these forms cannot be located in your account, contact Ms. Jennifer Kusnierczyk at [Kusnierczyk@cua.edu](mailto:Kusnierczyk@cua.edu) to add your name to the TE Database in LiveText. Below find the steps for filling out forms:
    - Click on FORMS under TOOLS on the left of the page once you sign in.
    - Click on COMPLETE on the right next to the name of the form.
    - Complete form and click on SUBMIT FORM. (We automatically get your responses; you don't have to share your form with us.)
  - b. GPA – The GPA expected below is the applicant's UG GPA. If the applicant has taken graduate courses in special education, a GPA of 3.3 or above for these courses is normally expected. Since most undergraduates take more courses in their major area during their last two years of undergraduate study and most apply for a graduate degree in special education after having completed an undergraduate degree in general education, we look for a GPA of 3.0 in the applicant's major, especially if that major is in education.
    - SPED: Cumulative GPA (2.75)
    - SPED: Specialty Area (major) GPA (3.00)
4. Candidates who are completing a Bachelor's degree at Catholic University and who are applying to obtain a Master's degree or a Graduate Teacher's Certificate (GTCP license) from Catholic University as part of the BA to MA sequence should make sure that they have taken EDUC 555: Classroom Management, EDUC 581: Educating Diverse Learners, and a course in normal human development (EDUC 261) as part of their undergraduate program. Taking these courses as an undergraduate will speed up their completion of a Master's degree program. Of course these courses can be taken at the graduate level but will add one semester of graduate work to their program of study.
  - a. Every candidate who wishes to be licensed as a special education teacher will have to submit passing scores on PRAXIS I (Reading, Writing, Math) either before applying for admission to Catholic University or before applying for licensure as a candidate completing an approved program. (See the next section for more detail.)

## II. PRAXIS

All undergraduate and graduate TE candidates must pass PRAXIS I (Reading, Writing, and Math) tests.

The ETS website at [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) includes all necessary information on taking the PRAXIS I tests including numbers of questions, material and concepts covered, and types of questions. You can take the 3 tests (2 hours each) on the computer a few days after you sign up (maybe even the following day).

### 1. PRAXIS I (Reading, Writing, Math)

- To register for the test, contact ETS at <http://www.ets.org> (or call 1-800-772-9476) and tell them the zip code of the area you'd like to take the test in. You can select among various test locations.
  - DC and CUA cut scores
    - DC (R172, W171, M174)
    - CUA (R177, W173, M177, Cum.527)
- MA candidates have until program completion to pass the PRAXIS I tests.
- Computer-Based Testing (CBT) allows you to see your scores in Reading and Math right away. It takes 6 weeks to obtain the score from the writing test that is hand-scored.
- Make sure you mark **CUA as a score recipients** because CUA needs to get your official score report from ETS directly.

More specifically, you can find info on PRAXIS I at:

<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=359baf5e44df4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD&vgnextchannel=d378197a484f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

Go down the page where you see the following textbox. Click on the PDF file to view specific information on each test.

### Test Requirements

Licensure Area	Session/ Test CodeName	Test	Qualifying Score
All Areas	10710	PPST Reading	172
	20720	PPST Writing	171
	10730	PPST Mathematics (calculators prohibited)	174

## 2. PRAXIS II

- All PRAXIS II information can be located at [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org). Click on PRAXIS, then PRAXIS II. Specific information can be located by going to *State Requirements*, click on *District of Columbia*, click on PDF file next to test.
- All SPED candidates must pass the PRAXIS II test in order to obtain a license in the *District of Columbia*. The test required by DC is # 20353: Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge. The minimum qualifying score is 146.

## III. LiveText

Each SPED candidate must purchase LiveText (\$109) and are asked by faculty members to submit particular key assignments in LiveText.

- o LiveText training
  - o **Upon request, the skills of submitting and sharing assignments in LiveText are demonstrated at the orientation session.**
  - o How to submit FORMS in LiveText
  - o How to submit assignments in LiveText

## IV. Special Education Field Experiences

- Special Education Field Experiences include EDUC 532, 533, 534. These field experiences are essential parts of every special education candidate's program.
  - o EDUC 532 is generally taken during the first summer after passing the first 9 credit hours of the scaffolded special education program. This field experience is taken at a site different from the candidate's work site.
  - o EDUC 533 is generally taken the next semester after completing EDUC 635, while EDUC 534 is generally taken the semester after taking EDUC 536. EDUC 533 and 534 may be taken during one full-time semester, or during two part-time semesters, which may include summer sessions.
  - o Candidates who are employed as teachers in a local school should make arrangements to fulfill the requirements of EDUC 533 and 534 at their places of employment if their work site has been found to be acceptable to the candidate's advisor and/or the Director of Special Education.
  - o Candidates who are pursuing their course of study full-time, and who are not employed at a local school, must make application for placement at a local school the beginning of the semester before they plan to enroll in EDUC 533 or 534. These placements must be coordinated with the candidate's advisor and the Director of Special Education.
  - o To obtain application forms, contact Ms. Jennifer Kusnierczyk ([Kusnierczyk@cua.edu](mailto:Kusnierczyk@cua.edu)) to add your name to the database. Once you are added, the form automatically appears in your LiveText account for you to fill out.
  - o There may be situations in which the candidate's workplace will not sustain a field placement, and an alternative site will have to be secured.

- Candidates who are having difficulty in securing placements should contact either Dr. Thomas Long at (202) 319-5809, or Dr. Carole Brown at (202) 319-5887.

### V. Policies in Teacher Education: Special Education

- Admission & Retention policy
  - Maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.75 and a specialty area GPA of 3.00.
  - For retention, graduate candidates must earn a minimum of C in every course taken for licensure. Graduate candidates who receive a grade of C in a graduate course will be counseled by their advisor. Those who obtain a second C grade in a graduate course may be dropped from the program.
  - **Any graduate course in which the candidate receives a failing grade, even an administrative E (failing grade), must be repeated and satisfactorily passed to continue in the program.**
  - Talk with your advisor before retaking any course.
- Only **one provisional** and **one probationary** semester can be given to candidates.
- Appeal process is available for (1) decisions in the Unit Assessment System (if e.g., someone is dismissed from TE) and (2) disposition concerns.
- Background check for field experiences
- You are expected to abide by the university policy on academic honesty and integrity. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the policy at The Catholic University of America. You can find the Academic Dishonesty policy at <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrity.cfm>.
- All academic policies for graduate students are located at <http://policies.cua.edu/academicgrad/index.cfm>.
- CUA's policy regarding Absenteeism: [http://policies.cua.edu/view\\_policy.cfm?pol=197](http://policies.cua.edu/view_policy.cfm?pol=197)
- See **Graduate Student Handbook** for other policies

### Miscellaneous Information

- All important documents (Conceptual Framework, Unit Assessment System) are uploaded at the following website: <http://education.cua.edu/tedocs.cfm>
- Video clips on the Conceptual Framework and the Teacher Education programs are also included at the same website.
- Communication with your instructor and advisor
- CUA resources for academic and emotional support
- Information about the non-thesis papers and comprehensive examinations
- Information about completing the Action Research Project
- Information about submitting all performance assessments done over the course of the special education program on LiveText. **Final grades are given only when key assessments are submitted to the professors in LiveText.**
- Impact of personal photos/videos on internet

I verify that I have attended the orientation meeting and received all Teacher Education materials. I understand that if I have any questions, I can contact the following people in the Teacher Education Office located in O'Boyle:

- Ms. Tsedale Mammo, Ms. Jennifer Kusnierczyk, Dr. Thomas J. Long, or Dr. Carole Brown

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Signature of Teacher Education Candidate

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Date

Revised: September 16, 2007