

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Web Site: <https://twu.edu/teacher-education/graduate-programs/special-education/>

The Ph.D. in Special Education prepares graduates to teach, conduct research, and provide professional service related to evidence-based practices in educating students with disabilities. Graduates are engaged, prepared, and professional educators who are ready to lead in the field of special education. Coursework includes specialized doctoral seminars, applicable research classes, a cognate ("minor") area of study, and focused mentorship experiences. The program is student-focused and individualized as needed. Please refer to Special Education (<https://twu.edu/teacher-education/graduate-programs/special-education/>) for additional details.

The Ph.D. in Special Education is offered as a cooperative program between Texas Woman's University, the University of North Texas, and East Texas A&M University under guidelines established by the Federation of North Texas Area Universities (<http://www.twu.edu/federation/>). The Federation enables students to utilize the combined faculty, library, computer facilities, and research opportunities available at all three universities in the development of their doctoral studies.

The federation doctoral program provides opportunities for formal course work, seminars, independent study, participation in regional and national conferences, and dissertation research. The program also includes federation-sponsored seminars featuring outstanding nationally and internationally recognized educators. The purpose of the federated doctoral program in special education is to prepare professional educators to assume leadership roles in higher education and EC-12 educational settings. Graduates are prepared to assume diverse roles, including teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. Students initially apply for admission to the graduate school of one of the participating universities. Admission is based on a holistic evaluation of a variety of factors.

Marketable Skills

Marketable skills prepare students for success in a variety of professional settings. Developed through academic coursework, co-curricular engagement, and extracurricular involvement, these skills include communication, critical thinking, teamwork, ethical reasoning, adaptability, and digital literacy. Whether directly related to a student's major or serving as complementary strengths, marketable skills enhance career readiness and reflect TWU's commitment to producing graduates who are prepared to thrive in today's dynamic workforce.

1. Effectively manage leadership opportunities related to the teaching, service, and scholarship efforts of those who support the education of students with disabilities and their families.
2. Accurately design, implement, and evaluate independent research related to special education and disseminate research results to the appropriate audience in an effort to bridge the research-to-practice gap in the field of special education.
3. Articulate and take advantage of service opportunities where their professional expertise is needed and valued, thus improving the education and life outcomes for learners with disabilities and their families.

Admissions

All students must meet the University requirements as outlined in the Admission to the TWU Graduate School (<https://catalog.twu.edu/graduate/graduate-school/admission-graduate-school/>) section of the catalog.

The academic program may have additional admission criteria that must also be completed as outlined on the program's website.

Degree Requirements

Total Semester Credit Hours Required

A minimum of 75 semester credit hours (SCH) beyond the baccalaureate, including 6 SCH for dissertation.

Course	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
EDSP 6103	Social, Psychological, and Educational Aspects of Intellectual and Development Disabilities	3
EDSP 6303	Seminar in Emotional and Behavioral Disorders	3
EDSP 6403	Seminar in Learning Disabilities	3
EDSP 6603	Social Constructs of Disabilities	3
Research		
EDSP 6003	Single Subject Research	3
ELDR 5203	Research in Education	3
Six SCH in statistics (selected with advisor.)		6
Three SCH Qualitative Research course (selected with advisor.)		3
Mentorship		
EDSP 6913	Independent Study (Mentorship in Teaching)	3
EDSP 6913	Independent Study (Mentorship in Research)	3
Dissertation		
EDSP 6983	Dissertation	3
EDSP 6993	Dissertation	3
Additional Major Courses		
Selected in consultation with advisor.		36
Three SCH of additional research coursework is recommended.		
Selected in consultation with advisor.		
Cognate/Minor Area of Study		
Please note: Students in the COMS cognate (15 SCH) will take the following:		
COMS 5113	Seminar in Communication Sciences (must be repeated once for credit)	
COMS 5253	Research Application in Communication Sciences (must be repeated once for credit)	
COMS 5383	Seminar in Pedagogy	
Total SCHs		75

Major/Emphasis

Requirements will depend upon individual student's needs. Transfer of coursework from a student's masters' degree is not automatic; please see the Graduate School guidelines for credit by transfer (<http://catalog.twu.edu/graduate/graduate-school/general-requirement-regulations-doctoral-degrees/credit-by-transfer/>). Courses from a masters' degree are only transferred with advisor approval.

Research Tools

Students must take EDSP 6003 and ELDR 5203, two sequential statistics classes, and one qualitative research course at the 5000 or 6000 level as determined by their advisor.

Mentorship Requirement

Two semesters of mentorship, EDSP 6913 (Mentorship in Teaching) and EDSP 6913 (Mentorship in Research), supervised by a TWU Teacher Education faculty member. One of these individual studies is a supervised university teaching experience; the other is a supervised research experience.

Qualifying Examination

A comprehensive portfolio examination that demonstrates a student's depth and breadth of knowledge related to special education determines a student's eligibility for candidacy. The student's advisory committee and other Special Education faculty grade the portfolio on a rubric.

Sections deemed unsatisfactory may be presented again one time after six months.

Final Examination

Students must successfully complete a research project, write the dissertation according to advisory committee and TWU Graduate School guidelines, and defend the dissertation in an open meeting, which requires answering questions effectively and demonstrating competence and fluency with content.

Courses of Instruction in Special Education with Federation Universities

Students wishing to enroll in Federation courses will do so through a cross-registration mechanism administered by the TWU Graduate School after their major advisor has approved the coursework.