

Georgia State University Behavior and Learning Disabilities FAQ's

Welcome to the Behavior and Learning Disabilities program at Georgia State University. In an effort to answer some of the more common questions, we have developed a FAQ list. Please read over the list of questions and answers below. If your answers are not addressed by these FAQs, please feel free to contact us.

Question: What kind of certification program does GSU offer?

Answer: Previously our certification program was titled Behavior and Learning Disabilities Interrelated. You still may hear this term being used. Our current program is entitled Special education General Curriculum: Consultative (P-12).

Question: What is a cohort and why am I in one?

Answer: A cohort is a group of students who go through the program at the same time. A cohort has the potential to provide you with support from a group of people who you know.

Question: How do I apply to the certification program?

Answer: You apply to the certification program online. You will apply at the following webpage:

http://education.gsu.edu/coe/content/admissions_ps.htm

Question: What happens after I complete the admissions application?

Answer: Once you have completed your application, it will be reviewed by the admissions office and forwarded to our department. If you meet the admission requirements, you will be sent information indicating that you have been admitted to our program.

Question: What are the basic admission requirements?

Answer: You must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited school. The bachelor's degree can be in any area. You must have a 2.5 GPA or higher at the bachelor's level. Additional university, college, and department requirements may be indicated.

Question: Are your courses online?

Answer: The majority of classes are not online. A few of them may have online components but the majority is offered at the GSU downtown campus. In some cases, GSU has agreements with school systems where the classes are offered off-campus. These off-campus locations are often held at a location in the school district.

- Question:** Can I work while taking certification and Master's classes?
Answer: Yes, you can work. In fact, the majority of our students do work while taking our courses. It provides you with a great opportunity to put what you learn in your classes into practice.
- Question:** Does it matter where I work while I am taking classes?
Answer: Students can maintain any type of employment that they want while taking classes. The best employment situation is one where you teach students with mild disabilities. Typically this does not include settings where the central purpose is to teach students with autism, physical disabilities, severe/profound disabilities, visually impaired, or deaf/blindness. Since our classes require students to complete assignments in the classroom, students who are teachers of students with mild behavior and learning disabilities will be able to complete most of the projects in their classroom. In some cases, you may need to complete some assignments in another setting. If you are a paraprofessional in a classroom for those with behavior and learning disabilities, you should make arrangements with the teacher of that class to complete the assignments. If you are employed outside of a classroom for those with behavior and learning disabilities, you will be required to make arrangements so class requirements can be completed in the appropriate classroom setting. We will attempt to place you in a classroom setting that meet your particular needs based on program requirements.
- Question:** When are the classes offered?
Answer: Classes during the fall and spring semesters are offered in the evenings. Classes during the summer may be during the day or evening. Every attempt is made to have your semester classes on the same weeknight. For example, if you have two classes, we will try to arrange for the first class to be at 4:30 till 7:00 while the second course is at 7:15 till 9:45 on Monday nights. While we do make this attempt, we do not guarantee that this will occur.
- Questions:** What certification classes must I take?
Answer: The certification courses include the following:
EXC 4010 Characteristics of Students with Disabilities (3)
EXC 6560 Educational Evaluation of Students with Disabilities (3)
EXC 6661 Practicum I: Behavior/Learning Disabilities (3)
EXC 6570 Individual and Classroom Management (3)
EXC 6580 Instructional Methods for Students with Behavior/Learning Disabilities (3)
EXC 6590 Functional and Social Methods for Students with Behavior/Learning Disabilities (3)
EXC 6671 Partnerships & Practicum II: BLD (3)
EPY 2050 Human Growth and Development (3)

EDRD 6600 Introduction to Materials and Methods of Reading Instruction (3)
 EXC 7190 Alternative Approaches to Literacy Instruction for Students with Disabilities (3)
 EDRD 7650 Individualized Assessment & Instruction for At-Risk Readers (3)

Question: What is the length of the certification program?

Answer: The entire certification program takes appropriately 5 semesters.

Question: What might a 5 semester course sequence look like?

Answer:

Semester	Courses
Fall 2017	EXC 4010: Characteristics of Students with Disabilities (Prerequisite: Admission to Initial Certification Program in Special Education General Curriculum: Consultative, P-12) EXC 6570: Individual and Classroom Management
Spring 2018	EXC 6560: Educational Evaluation of Students with Disabilities EXC 6580: Instructional Methods for Students with Behavior and Learning Disabilities EXC 6661: Field Experience with Students with Behavior and Learning Disabilities
Summer 2018	EXC 7190: Alternative Approaches to Literacy Instruction for Students with Disabilities EDRD 6600: Introduction to Materials and Methods of Reading Instruction
Fall 2018	EDRD 7650: Individualized Assessment and Instruction for At-Risk Readers EPY 2050: Human Growth and Development* *(if needed, can be taken through PLU, another university, or at any time)
Spring 2019	EXC 6590: Functional and Social Methods for Students with Behavior and Learning Disabilities EXC 6671: Educational Partnerships for Students with Behavior and Learning Disabilities: Practicum in Special Education
	<i>Notes:</i> 1. submission of a Reading Endorsement Portfolio is required if you do not to take and pass the HQ reading test 2. submission of a Behavior and Learning Disabilities practicum portfolio is required to graduate

Question: How do I apply for financial aid?

Answer: For additional information about financial aid, please visit the following webpage: <http://education.gsu.edu/main/FinancialAid.htm> Ask the financial aid office whether or not HOPE will provide funds if you are signed up for the certification and the masters. Also check to see if there

are programs that will assist you in paying back loans once you start teaching (e.g. federal and/or state loan forgiveness programs.)

Question: What is the length of Master's program?

Answer: The length of the Master's program varies. It depends upon how many classes you take at each semester. There is a minimum of 36 credit hours required.

Question: Can I transfer in credits from another institution into the certification program?

Answer: Because of how our initial certification courses are designed, we only accept credit for EPY 2050 (Human Growth and Development). Your advisor will determine if you may be given credit for the course. You will find out if will be given credit for the course during the initial advisement meeting. This course may be taken as a PLU with your advisor's permission. You may transfer a minimum number of credits based on university policies and advisor permission for the Master's program.

Question: When can I start the program?

Answer: We currently accept students during summer and fall semesters for the initial certification program. The determination of when you start is based on when you turn in your application and the spaces that are available. Students starting the Master's program can start during any semester.

Question: When is the initial advisement and what does it entail?

Answer: Once you are admitted into the program you receive a letter indicating when your initial advisement meeting will be held. It is a group and individual advisement process. You will be provided with an overview of the program and then meet individually with your advisor to discuss anything specific about your program.

Question: How does the BLD certification program address the need for me to be highly qualified according the No Child Left Behind Act?

Answer: Our certification program allows students to become highly qualified in reading. By taking EDRD 6600, EXC 7190, and EDRD 7650, students will become highly qualified in reading. These courses require students to complete a reading portfolio. The reading portfolio will be explained to you when you take the EDRD 6600 class.

Question: Can I apply for the masters program at the same time I apply to the certification program?

Answer: Yes, you can apply to both programs at the same time. To be admitted to the master's program, you will need to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and receive an acceptable score. Details about admissions to the program can be found online where you applied to the program or in the Graduate Catalog.

Question: What courses are required for the Master's program?

Answer: The following courses comprise the Master's program courses:

All of the following must be taken:

EXC 7460 Mathematics Instruction in Special Education (I)

EDMT 7400 Math Concepts for Special Learners

EXC 7150 Methods of Teaching Academics: BLD (3)

EXC 7130 Assessment for Instructional Planning (3)

EXC 7160 Strategies for Social & Emotional Behavior: BLD (3)

EXC 7170 Methods of Teaching Functional Life Skills: BLD (3)

EXC 7941 Practicum in Special Education III (3)

Select 1 from each of the following three categories

Category 1: EPRS 7900 Methods of Research in Education (3) or EPRS 7910 Action Research (3) or EPRS 7920 Educational Measurement (3);

Category 2: EPY 7080 The Psychology of Learning and Learners (3) or EPY 7090 The Psychology of Learning and Learners: The Young Child (3) or EPY 7100 The Psychology of Learning and Learners: PreAdo/Adolescent (3); and

Category 3: EPSF 7120 Social and Cultural Foundations of Education (3) or EPSF 7100 Critical Pedagogy (3) or EPSF 7110 Multicultural Education (3)

Guided electives (Select two)

EXC 7010 Language Development and Disabilities (3)

EXC 7030 Applied Behavior Analysis (3)

EXC 7340 Post-School Transition for Students with Disabilities (3)

EXC 7320 Methods of Teaching Students with Autism (3)

EXC 7310 Strategies for Challenging Behavior (3)

EXC 7470 Mathematics Instruction in Special Education (II)

Or other courses with the approval of the advisor

Other requirements

State Examination(s) Passed (if applicable)

Comprehensive Exam

Take a total of at least 36 credit hours.

Question: How can I become highly qualified in math at the Master's level?

Answer: Our Master's program is designed so that teachers can become highly qualified in math. If you are interested in becoming highly qualified in math, when you meet with your advisor, please indicate so and she/he will provide you with details.

Question: What GACE tests must I take?

Answer: To be admitted to the initial certification program, you must take the Basic Skills test. To receive your certification you must take 081 and 082 tests.

Question: Are the certification courses similar to PLU courses offered by school systems? Are these courses easier than typical college level courses?

Answer: You should assume that these courses are difficult and not similar to PLU classes. Our program is a high quality graduate level program. School personnel have noted that students from our program are often much more prepared as compared to other less rigorous programs.

Question: What happens if I have a question or other concerns?

Answer: If you have questions about the status of your application or courses, contact Ms. Sandy Vaughn Williams at 404-413-8318 or svaughn@gsu.edu.