

# DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION: CONCENTRATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Ph.D. in Special Education is a joint doctoral program within the Graduate College of Education, SF State and the Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley. The doctoral committee is co-directed by a faculty member from each campus who functions in consultation with the Executive Committee composed of faculty members from both campuses. Student performance and competencies are required to meet the scholarly requirements of the Graduate Studies Divisions of both institutions.

Members of the SF State faculty are from the Department of Special Education, which represents multiple areas of study relating to people with disabilities. Faculty from departments such as communicative disorders, psychology, sociology, social work, ethnic studies, and English may also be available to work with doctoral students. The majority of the University of California, Berkeley faculty come from the Graduate School of Education and includes faculty from each of the major divisions: education, language, literacy, and culture; cognition and development; policy, organization, measurement, and evaluation; and social and cultural studies. In addition, faculty from several associated fields such as psychology, linguistics, public health, optometry, anthropology, public policy, social welfare, and social and behavioral sciences also participate in the program. Students are assigned a primary advisor from each campus.

## Admission Requirements

The program encourages individuals to apply who have a background and experience in special education, as well as those from related disciplines in the social, behavioral, and health sciences who seek leadership and research training. In addition to the academic criteria for admission, consideration is given to successful experience working with individuals with disabilities or in programs serving this population. Students without sufficient preparation and experience in special education will be considered for admission and required to enroll in prerequisite foundation coursework.

## Selection Criteria

The major factors used in the selection of candidates are:

- undergraduate grade point average;
- graduate grade point average;
- verbal and quantitative scores on the Graduate Record Examination, taken within the last five years (the GRE must be taken no later than the October test date preceding the admission deadline for fellowship applicants and no later than the December test date for applicants not applying for fellowships);
- letters of recommendation;
- statement of purpose which describes interests and research questions motivating the candidate to apply to the program;
- writing sample (e.g., research paper, publication, etc.);
- academic training and related professional experience in special education; and
- personal interview.

## Application Procedures

Applications must be submitted to the University of California, Berkeley (UCB). Faculty members from both campuses will review online applications submitted to UCB. Applicants do not apply to SF State Graduate Admissions until admission decisions are completed at the department level. For UCB, follow instructions outlined in the Graduate School of Education application and the Graduate Application for Admission and Fellowships. Contact SF State campus for the annual December application deadline and application: <https://sped.sfsu.edu/content/joint-doctorate> (<https://sped.sfsu.edu/content/joint-doctorate/>), (415) 338-1161; <https://gse.berkeley.edu/cognition-development/joint-special-ed> (<https://gse.berkeley.edu/cognition-development/joint-special-ed/>)

### Applications and contact information for each campus:

Department of Special Education  
Joint Doctoral Program  
San Francisco State University  
1600 Holloway Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94132  
Phone: (415) 338-1161  
Email: [sped@sfsu.edu](mailto:sped@sfsu.edu)  
<https://sped.sfsu.edu/content/joint-doctorate> (<https://sped.sfsu.edu/content/joint-doctorate/>)

Graduate School of Education  
2121 Berkeley Way  
University of California  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1670 USA  
Phone: (510) 642-0841  
Website: [gse.berkeley.edu](http://gse.berkeley.edu) (<http://gse.berkeley.edu>)

UCB applications are available after August 1.

## Program Learning Outcomes

The program is aimed at preparing high level leaders in research, teaching, administration, and supervision for the variety of professional needs facing children, youth, and adults with disabilities. It integrates the resources of the University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco State University and provides an opportunity for students to combine theoretical interests with applied practices in a broad spectrum of specializations within Special Education.

## Areas of Specialization

In conjunction with the primary advisors, students will select a course of study which is congruent with their professional development goals and previous coursework and experience. Students select three areas of specialization in consultation with the primary advisors. These three areas are to represent three distinct areas of study and represent substantial and different bodies of relevant literature. A minimum of three courses or nine units is required in each area of specialization, not including directed or independent study.

Students select an area of academic specialization in both special and general education. Faculty and program resources on the two campuses are used to develop advanced knowledge of theory and research in an area of exceptionality. Specializations include: human development; language and literacy; bilingualism; technology; educational policy and administration; early childhood special education; mild to moderate support needs; extensive support needs; autism; visual impairment; and other areas selected by students in consultation with faculty advisors.

Students develop three areas of emphasis or specialization within their program.

Students who are accepted into the program and who have minimal or no academic coursework in special education will be required to enroll in prerequisite foundation courses. These courses are taken primarily at the SF State campus.

**Normative Time for Program**

The normative time for completion of the doctoral degree is six years. Two years of full-time residence is required.

**Enrollment**

Enrollment is required on a year-to-year basis on both campuses and fees are paid to one campus during alternate years. Payment of fees on one campus permits the student to take coursework and utilize the facilities of the other campus at no additional charge. Students may elect courses from any department or college on either campus each semester. Core courses are completed within the first two years in the program.

**Pre-qualifying Review**

The prequalifying review for the doctoral degree consists of the approval of three position papers, one of which is an empirical paper, and a dissertation prospectus. The position papers cover the three areas of specialization and need to demonstrate theoretical competence in the field of academic preparation as applied to problems of educational significance and competence in research methods. Students are encouraged to pursue a one-time university-level teaching experience for course credit with a faculty mentor.

**Qualifying Examination**

The qualifying examination is an oral examination of three hours duration. The examination committee is comprised of at least four members representing each campus. From UC Berkeley, one member is from the Graduate School of Education and one member from outside the school. From SF State, at least one member is from the Department of Special Education. The student, in consultation with the primary advisor, selects members of the oral examination committee. The chairperson of the committee may be a member from either campus. The passing of the oral examination is a prerequisite to advancement to candidacy.

**Advancement to Candidacy**

Following successful completion of the qualifying examination, the student advances to candidacy and submits a dissertation proposal. Advancement to candidacy occurs by the end of the semester following the completion of the qualifying examination. A dissertation committee, comprised of faculty members representing both campuses, is formed. One member must be outside the UCB School of Graduate Education. The student selects the committee and requests a faculty member from each campus to serve as co-chair. The approved dissertation prospectus form allows enrollment in dissertation coursework in the subsequent semester. Completion of the dissertation results in the award of a doctoral degree.

**Education (Ph.D.) Concentration in Special Education – 45-53 Units**

**SF State Core Courses**

Code	Title	Units
SPED 903	Research Seminar in Special Education: Program Design and Analysis	3
SPED 907/ EDDL 922	Critical Investigations of the Construction of Normalcy and Disability	3

SPED 909	Current Issues Special Education Policy and Practice	3
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**UCB Core Courses**

Code	Title	Units
Select one:		
EDUC 200A	Cognitive Development	
EDUC 205	Instruction and Development	
EDUC 291C	Cognition, Learning, and Instruction: Childhood and Adolescence	
Or approved alternative		
<b>Must take the following courses:</b>		
EDUC 293A	Data Analysis in Educational Research	
EDUC 293L	Educational Data Analysis Laboratory	

**Additional Coursework at SF State (Minimum 3 units each semester)**

During participation in the doctoral program, students need to enroll in a minimum of 3 units at SF State and 12 units at UCB each semester. Additional coursework at SF State includes the following doctoral level courses, as well as additional graduate level courses in special education under advisement.

Code	Title	Units
SPED 601	Observation and Participation in Special Education	1-3
SPED 905	University-Level Teaching & Field Supervision Internship	3
SPED 908	Directed Study in Special Education Topics	3
SPED 910	Advanced Topics in Special Education Research	3
SPED 998	Doctoral Dissertation in Special Education	3

**Note:** At San Francisco State University, doctoral candidates repeat enrollment in SPED 908 each semester with their primary advisor for up to, but not exceeding, eight semesters. Following advancement to candidacy, the doctoral candidate enrolls in SPED 998 each semester with the chair, or co-chair, of their dissertation committee, for up to, and not exceeding three semesters.