



## **Online Master's Degree in Special Education with Professional Certification as Educational Diagnostician FAQs**

**Program Description:** The Masters of Education Degree with a major in Special Education is designed for the practicing teacher to build professional knowledge and practical skills. Completion of degree requirements will allow the candidate to become certified as an Educational Diagnostician. Candidates who are not practicing special educators may be required to complete leveling courses. As a student of the program you will:

- Apply what you learn through meaningful practicum experiences
- Be conversant with the literature of the field and evidence-based practices.
- Understand the issues, trends, and research that influence contemporary education.

### **How can you deliver this instruction online effectively?**

The success of online learning is determined by many factors including a) student motivation, b) responsiveness of instructor, and c) program design.

- a) **Student Motivation:** Students who have completed this program have been highly motivated and dedicated to the field of special education. They possess and develop many of the skills that are necessary to be a successful educational diagnostician -especially time management and organizational skills. They take an active role in their own learning by asking questions, researching, and collaborating.
- b) **Responsiveness of Instructor:** Midwestern State University has always prided itself on its small classes and individual attention it pays to students. This program maintains these points of pride. Some students need more support from instructor, while other students seem to thrive on independent study. Our small class sizes allow the needs of both of these students to be met.
- c) **Program design:** The program is designed with the Texas Educational Diagnostician Standards as the foundation along with Diagnostician and Special Education Leadership standards of The Council for Exceptional Children (newly revised 2008). Upon completion of the program, students will have been taught the required standards and completed the required practicum hours to be eligible to become certified as an educational diagnostician. See link below:

[http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.viewTAC?tac\\_view=5&ti=19&pt=7&ch=239&sch=C&rl=Y](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.viewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=19&pt=7&ch=239&sch=C&rl=Y)

### **How is instruction delivered?**

Instruction is delivered using a variety of methods. Instruction for this program can be described as meaningful, rigorous, and flexible in its delivery. A brief description the types of methods appear below:

- a) Traditional Online instruction Tools using Blackboard/WebCT that allows for posting of information, discussion boards, online assessment, email, and communication tools.
- b) Textbooks/Professional Library : An educational diagnostician needs a professional library in order to be effective. Textbooks are best viewed as tools and as an investment in this program and will become part of your professional library.
- c) DVD/CD instruction: Courses in individualized assessment have traditionally have been delivered in the classroom with the instructor demonstrating, student practicing, and then the student practicing with real children. Test companies now supply training videos and webinars to teach how to administer and score their testing instruments (WISC-4, WJ-III, and KABC). This instruction is usually provided by the author of the test who is regarded as the authority on the instrument. Instruction via distance is very similar to the instruction in the classroom. The following sequence to teach each instrument is: 1) become familiar with test kit and manual, 2) watch DVD/CD (pause and practice), 3) recruit real subject and practice, 4) score and report, and 5) reflect.

\*Once you learn the basics of test administration and have practiced using several instruments, you will be able to use these skills to administer and score other instruments. As you go through your career, new and revised instruments will come out periodically. You will actually go through this same sequence as a practicing diagnostician.

- d) Video-Conferencing: Using video sharing software, webcam, and microphone, we have the ability to communicate, share a computer screen, observe, record, and teach. A webcam and microphone is all that is needed (less than 25\$).
- e) Practicum experiences: The online option (and traditional option too) requires extensive field experiences including testing students from a wide range of age groups and backgrounds, parents, and supervised experiences with educational

diagnosticians. This is in addition to the hands-on experience you will gain from the other courses. This will ensure your competency and confidence as an educational diagnostician.

### **What if I already have a Masters Degree and want to become an educational diagnostician?**

Students who already possess a master's degree can become an educational diagnostician via distance education too. A transcript review will be conducted and an individualized deficiency plan will be developed based on this review. Past deficiency plans have ranged from 18-36 hours. In general, the more special education courses you have taken, the fewer hours it will require.

### **What is the admission requirement for the West College of Education?**

#### **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

All students seeking admission to graduate programs in the West College of Education must meet three types of admission requirements: University requirements, West College of Education requirements, and specific program requirements. University requirements for admission to graduate study are in the Academic and University Information section (see pages 20-21).

1. Students must make a passing score of 3.5 on the GRE writing sample in order to be admitted to the program. A student failing to pass the test must retake the analytical writing portion of the GRE and earn a passing score or take the GRE ScoreItNow test, which requires a passing score of 4.0. Students who do not make a satisfactory score on the writing must enroll in ENGL 2113 or an approved equivalent course and make a grade of B or higher.
2. Students who have a GPA of at least 3.0 in their last 60 hours of undergraduate courses (excluding community college work) may be admitted with a score of at least 405 on the Miller Analogies Test and are not required to take the GRE. Students who choose to take the MAT are required to take the GRE ScoreItNow test, which requires a passing score of 4.0.
3. Admission to a specific program also requires a satisfactory background of undergraduate course work and experience. Admission to all programs requires 18 to 24 hours of acceptable undergraduate course work. Leveling work may be required if a student needs additional undergraduate background. Admission to all programs except the M.A. in Counseling, Human Resource Development, and Training and Development requires appropriate teacher certification. Persons not interested in Texas Professional Certification may be exempt from this requirement. Admission to the counseling or educational leadership programs requires a screening interview. Specific program requirements are listed with each program major and option.
4. Students who enter as non-degree seeking or professional development status and are later admitted to the graduate program may apply 9 hours to a graduate degree if the completed course work is approved by the Graduate Coordinator and Dean of the College.

### **ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY**

Admission to candidacy for graduate programs in the West College of Education will be determined by the Graduate Advisory Committee and will require:

- a qualifying examination to determine proficiency in writing taken in the first six hours of course work. If the student does not pass the writing sample, remediation will be prescribed.
- students not passing the GRE Writing Analysis or the GRE ScoreItNow test may continue with their course work but must take ENGL 2113, Composition Skills and make a B or better, the following semester.
- successful completion of fifteen hours of course work.

**Grades for Graduate Study.** Only grades of A, B, and C are acceptable in graduate courses. No more than two grades of C may be applied to the Master's degree. Upon earning a third grade of C or lower, the Faculty Review Committee will recommend to the Dean whether or not the student should be dismissed from the graduate program.

**Oral Comprehensive Examination.** All students must pass an oral comprehensive examination prior to receiving the graduate degree. In the examination, the student will present the research undertaken in the file paper. Successful completion will demonstrate the student's ability to integrate theory with practice, as evidenced by the file paper, its oral defense, and other topics determined by the Graduate Advisory Committee. any program.

### **Where/How to apply?**

Access the following link.

<http://admissions.mwsu.edu/apply.asp>