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## Master of Education in Special Education with the Educational Diagnostician Certification Online Graduate Program (36 hours)

### About the Program

The Master of Education in Special Education with the educational diagnostician certification offered through SFA ONLINE provides graduate-level preparation in the area of special education, assessment and education law. An educational diagnostician is a master's level professional who works within the public school system to ensure that special education services are provided to eligible students in accordance with all applicable federal laws and regulations, state statutes, Texas Education Agency, and the Commissioner of Education. The program consists of master's level coursework and preparation for certification as an educational diagnostician. This degree requires teacher certification and 2 years of teaching experience prior to admission to the program.

The curriculum is designed in accordance with the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) standards for educational diagnosticians and the Advanced Special Education Diagnostician Specialist Set from the international Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). These frameworks are utilized to insure that candidates receive a comprehensive foundation of knowledge based on educational theory, research and best practice policies. The program uses a performance-based assessment system to rate student performance on key assessments in various classes in order to provide data for accreditation and for program improvement. Program students will be prepared for and required to pass the #161 All-Level Special Education TExES prior to being granted testing clearance for the #153 Educational Diagnostician TExES. Some related certifications may be substituted for the #161 TExES requirement.

### Dates & Registration

Applications are accepted for each fall semester with some students being eligible for enrollment during a spring or summer semester. Please contact Dr. Paige Mask ([maskp@sfasu.edu](mailto:maskp@sfasu.edu)) about the availability of program entry during a spring or summer semester. A pre-admission process must be completed before admission to the program is granted. Applicants must meet [criteria for admission outlined by the SFASU Graduate School](#).

## How to Apply

Before you complete an application to the Graduate School at Stephen F. Austin State University, please complete the pre-admission process described below (items 1-9). Please do not submit a Graduate School application before completing these requirements, as the \$50 application fee is non-refundable. After the items below are gathered, please contact Dr. Paige Mask ([maskp@sfasu.edu](mailto:maskp@sfasu.edu)) to request a shared folder link where you will upload all of your pre-admission items. Dr. Mask will also be your contact person for questions.

1. Letter from your Special Education Director indicating permission for you to complete a 160-hour practicum experience over the course of two semesters at the end of your certification program. Dr. Mask has a letter that explains the practicum component and you may request a copy of this letter and then provide a copy to your special education director.

**Note:** Please know that school districts are not required or obligated to grant permission for practicum experiences to prospective SFA students. Your request for practicum experiences must be done respectfully and with the full knowledge that your first priority to the district/school are your teaching responsibilities or other currently held position in the district. You will have 2 semesters in which to earn 160 hours of practicum experience. The majority of our students continue to work full-time in a district while completing these hours.

2. Copy of your official Teacher Service Record (TSR)
3. Copy of undergraduate transcript(s) and, if applicable, graduate transcript(s).
4. Copy of your teacher certifications, which may be obtained from the [State Board for Educator Certification](#).
5. Completed Advanced Certification Seeking tracking form which may be requested from Dr. Paige Mask. This certification tracking form **will not** be submitted until you are admitted to the program and enrolled in your first semester of coursework.
6. Three letters of recommendation (two of a professional nature and one can be a community member who has known you for some time). Please make sure these letters are signed.
7. Current resume
8. Essay – a typed, double-spaced written statement (minimum 3-5 pages in length) describing your experience in the field of special education, your philosophy on educating students with special needs, and how personal qualities and educational experience would make you an exceptional candidate for the special education graduate program.
9. A video-recording introducing yourself to program faculty in a professional manner. This video is to be no longer than 4 minutes in duration. A free video recording resource may be found at [screencast-o-matic.com](https://www.screencast-o-matic.com). Please include the following information in your video.

- Name
- Current employment
- Years of teaching experience and types of teaching experiences.
- Teacher certifications
- Qualities and competencies you possess that would make you a good candidate for our program and a future quality educational diagnostician in the field.
- Statement regarding your ability and motivation to participate in a rigorous certification program.

When the above items have been completed and submitted, you may be asked to participate in a short, online video-conferencing interview session in which you will be asked up to five additional questions. You will access this interview via a provided web link. Once this process is completed and you been notified of your acceptance to the program, you may apply to the Graduate School via [ApplyTexas.org](https://www.applytexas.org). Please complete the application as an M.Ed. in Special Education seeking student. Please do not submit a Graduate School application before completing these requirements, as the \$50 application fee is non-refundable.

Finally, if you did not receive your undergraduate degree from SFA, ensure that copies of your undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) transcripts are sent to the SFA Graduate School.

For more information about applying to the program, please contact Dr. Mask at [maskp@sfasu.edu](mailto:maskp@sfasu.edu).

## Costs & Financial Aid

Prospective students can calculate tuition and fee expenses by visiting the [SFA Tuition Calculator](#).

Financial aid is available to those who qualify. For more information, please contact the [SFA Financial Aid Office](#) at (936) 468-2403.