



**PH.D. PROGRAM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION – EMPHASIS IN APPLIED BEHAVIOR
ANALYSIS AND POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT (ABA/PBIS; INCLUDING
BCBA)**

(THIS IS A SPECIAL FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT)

OVERVIEW AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Ph.D. program in the Department of Special Education in the area of ABA/PBIS prepares doctoral candidates for faculty positions in higher education with a specialization in working with high need schools serving students with substantial behavioral and academic challenges. Students in this program may focus on a variety of populations, including Early Childhood Special Education, Mild to Moderate Disabilities, Severe Disabilities, Visual Impairments, and Deafblind. The Ph.D. program of study focuses on preparing persons to design and conduct scientific research in special education, effectively prepare special education teacher candidates, and provide service to the profession and community.

Our mission is to prepare doctoral candidates to develop and disseminate knowledge that will improve the education of students with disabilities through research, teaching, and service. To effectively prepare new leaders for roles in higher education, the Ph.D. program is competency and field-based, and focused on diverse faculty roles and responsibilities, and translating scientific research into effective practice.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

The Ph.D. Program Admissions Committee will review the following information in evaluating a candidate's qualifications for admission:

- Content, clarity, and organization of applicant's letter of intent, application for admissions form, professional position statement, and professional resume.
- Graduate Record Examination scores: General Test (verbal, quantitative, and analytical/writing).
- Faculty recommendations from personal interviews with applicant.
- Undergraduate GPA: 3.00 or above is required.
- Graduate GPA: 3.00 or above is required; 3.50 or above is recommended.
- A master's degree and a minimum of 2-3 years of certified classroom teaching or comparable applied experience is required for admission to the Ph.D. program.



- Review of three letters of recommendation from outside reviewers (submitted through the *APPLY YOURSELF* system). At least two of these letters **MUST** be from persons who can address the applicant's academic and scholarly abilities.

ADMISSION PROCESS

Students may apply for admission to the Ph.D. Program at any time during the year (including summer). Applicants must have a master's degree in a relevant field (e.g., general or special education, school psychology), and must have a minimum of 2-3 years of certified classroom teaching or comparable applied experience.

Applicants must complete the **APPLYYOURSELF** application. The current application for the Graduate School is the new **APPLYYOURSELF** application at <https://app.applyyourself.com/?id=utahgrad>. The Graduate School will not process your application without the required fee and original copies of **ALL** transcripts).

Each applicant admissions file must include the following materials on the APPLYYOURSELF system:

- Cover letter of intent to pursue doctoral study in special education.
- Professional position statement (1000 words or less) that includes rationale for pursuing the Ph.D. in special education, discussion of primary area(s) of interest (e.g., Early Childhood Special Education, Mild/Moderate Disabilities, ABA/PBS) and career goals in higher education.
- Three recommendations from outside evaluators. Each outside evaluator must complete and submit the Department of Special Education recommendation form. Applicants **MUST** solicit at least two (2) letters from persons who can address the applicant's capacity for academic and scholarly work.
- **APPLY YOURSELF** Graduate School Application for Admission to the Graduate School.
- Official undergraduate and graduate transcripts.
- Official copy of **Graduate Record Examination (GRE)** General Test scores (verbal, quantitative, and analytical/writing subtests). Applicant GRE test scores must have been obtained within the past five years.

NOTE: International students are also required to take the **Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)**. For the **paper-based test**, a score of 600 is required,



and for the **computer-based TOEFL**, a score of 250 **is required**.

International students whose native language is English should check with International Admissions (801-581-3091) about requirements for taking the **TOEFL-iBT**. This test is internet-based and has an oral component to it.

The following minimum scores are required for the TOEFL iBT:

Reading	22 (preferred score = 25)
Listening	22 (preferred score = 25)
Speaking	23 (preferred score = 25)
Writing	23 (preferred score = 25)

Therefore, **the minimum total score is 90** and the **preferred total score is 100**.

Students can also take the IELTS test. The score must be 7 or above.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH FACULTY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Each Ph.D. program applicant is required to participate in personal interviews with the Chair of the Department of Special Education and at least one other faculty member with expertise in the applicant’s primary area of interest. These interviews must be completed prior to the Admissions Committee’s review of the candidate’s completed admissions file.

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS IN THE ABA/PBIS PROGRAM

Federal Leadership Training Support

The Department currently has funding from a federal Leadership Training Grant to prepare doctoral level professionals with a focus on applied behavior analysis and positive behavior support (ABA/PBS), with an emphasis on working with students with behavioral and academic challenges in high need schools. If students are not already Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), coursework and supervision are incorporated and required in the program to prepare students to sit for the Board Certified Behavior Analyst exam.

This funding includes a stipend of \$30,000 per year, including a separate full waiver/coverage of tuition costs up to 12 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters. Accepted applicants would be eligible for this stipend funding for up to four (4) years, with tuition costs covered for up to three (3) years. Program participants *must* be full time students (i.e., not working outside the University). In



addition, participants will be required to participate in research assistant (RA) activities for a minimum of 20 hours per week with one or more Department faculty members.

Departmental Course Teaching

The doctoral program includes required coursework on university teaching, and a required teaching internship. However, upon successful completion of the required coursework and internship students may have the opportunity to be paid to teach courses within the Department in their area(s) of expertise depending on need, which varies from semester to semester and year to year.

Department, College, and University Scholarships

The Department periodically receives funding for student scholarships for which doctoral students may be eligible. These opportunities may shift from year to year depending on outside funding. Additional scholarship funding is available at both the College of Education and University levels. Further information about these possible funding sources can be found at <http://education.utah.edu/students/financial-aid.php>.

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