



**EDUCATION  
& HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

**SPECIAL**

**EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Dept. of Educational Psychology**

**2011-2012  
Doctoral Handbook**

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# WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

The Special Education (SPED) doctoral program is a full-time course of study designed to prepare its graduates for academic positions in universities and research institutions. The program includes challenging coursework grounded in the field's most current evidence and latest advancements in research methodologies. In addition to formal coursework, the doctoral program entails essential mentorship opportunities with SPED faculty as students learn to (a) participate in collaborative, community-based research and outreach projects; (b) present at national conferences in their respective emphasis areas of study; (c) co-author manuscripts for peer-reviewed publication; and (d) learn/practice the most effective college teaching approaches. These valuable vita-building research and teaching competencies provide a competitive advantage upon graduation.

## **The Department of Educational Psychology (EPSY)**

Educational Psychology (<http://epsy.tamu.edu>) is one of four departments in the College of Education and Human Development. The **EPSY Department Structure** (Appendix A) is comprised of five programs including Special Education, Bilingual Education, Learning Sciences, School Psychology, and Counseling Psychology. Graduate students within the College of Education are also subject to the administrative control of the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS; <http://ogs.tamu.edu>).

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# ADVISORS, COMMITTEES, AND ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

## EPSY Director of Academic Advising

The Student Services office is located in Room 704 EDCT in the main office of the Department of Educational Psychology. This office is staffed by the Director of Academic Advising and the Academic Advisor who handles the application process for the department. This office provides the following assistance:

- Applications and advising for all EPSY programs
- Registration
  - Drop/Add forms
  - Q-drop
  - In-absentia registration
- Deadlines
- Procurement of rooms for student advisory committee meetings
- Maintenance of student records
- Grade changes (through instructors)
- Variable credit course sign-up
- Student Information Management System (SIMS): Current tracking of courses, enrollment, and student status
- Record of addresses and phone numbers of current graduate students
- Dissertations
  - EPSY dissertations available for checkout in the Educational Research and Evaluation Laboratory <http://erel.tamu.edu/>
  - Computer access to dissertation topics, subtopics and research design

## Chair/Advisor

Upon admittance, all doctoral students are assigned an advisor (i.e., chair) from the **Special Education Program Faculty** (Appendix B). This assignment is based on the (a) incoming student's interests and career goals, (b) extent to which they align with a faculty member's expertise, and (c) faculty member's willingness to serve as advisor/chair. The role of the advisor/chair is to (a) assist students in interpreting university, departmental, and program regulations and requirements; (b) guide the selection of coursework and completion of program competencies; and (c) serve as chairperson of the student's program and dissertation committees. Students should consult with their chair prior to registering for the first semester of classes and each semester throughout the program.

Students may seek a different advisor/chair at any point in their doctoral program. A SPED Program faculty member must be the chair (or one of the co-chairs) of a SPED doctoral student's committee. Should a student seek a change in advisor/chair, the approached faculty member may ask the student to indicate why he or she believes a particular relationship is a good match.

Persons considering service as chair also may explore with students their thinking about other members of the Program Committee and/or Dissertation Committee.

### **Program Committee:**

The purpose of a Program Committee is to provide critical input and guidance as students plan their program of study and prepare to file a degree plan. The degree plan must be filed with OGS during the semester in which the student will complete their 36<sup>th</sup> hour of coursework. This typically occurs during the fall semester of a student's second year of doctoral studies. Accordingly, students should establish a program committee by the end of their first year of doctoral studies. The program committee is comprised of four individuals: the student's advisor (who serves as chair of the committee), two additional faculty members within the EPSY department, and one from outside of the EPSY department. The student's advisor (i.e., chair of the program committee) will offer guidance to help ensure that a given committee collectively reflects necessary expertise to guide the student in his or her chosen areas of interest and career goals. The chair's recommendations may also help ensure that a compatible committee is established.

The Program Committee is responsible for guiding and directing the student's entire academic program and initiating all academic actions concerning the student. The chair of the Program Committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's research and dissertation, may call for a meeting of the program committee at any time considered desirable. The duties of the Program Committee include responsibility for the degree program, the preliminary examination (written and oral), the dissertation, and the final examination (i.e., dissertation defense). In addition, the Program Committee (collectively and as individual members) is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and, in the case of academic deficiency, making recommendations to the Office of Graduate Studies. The Program Committee continues intact through a student's dissertation. However, in consultation with the advisor/chair, the student may change committee members by submitting the requisite forms to OGS.

### **SPED Doctoral Program Planning**

A program of study is a cumulative list of the coursework, credit-bearing tasks, and competencies that a student will complete to earn a degree. Students must file a Program of Study during the semester that they accumulate 36 credit hours. To complete this task, a student should (a) establish a program advisory committee, (b) work with his/her advisor to prepare a draft program of study, and (c) hold a committee meeting to present the draft and solicit revisions/feedback. (See Appendix C for the Program of Study Requirements Checklist.)

*Preparation:* Prior to meeting with the Program Committee, students should work closely with their advisors to draft a proposed list of courses and experiences that, in total, will advance their career goals. Written information should be prepared to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the meeting and allow members to readily identify areas in which the student wishes to develop expertise. In addition to articulating goals/areas of expertise, meeting materials should include a concise summary of the coursework already taken, along with a draft

of additional courses a student proposes to take. Many students summarize this information in two ways. First, information may be clustered by subject area to demonstrate how a series of courses and competencies will cumulatively lead to expertise in a given area. Second, it is helpful to also organize the same information in timeline format, perhaps by semester.

*Meeting:* After working with an advisor to prepare a draft, students should organize a meeting of all committee members to review the proposed program of study and solicit input for the official university degree plan (see below) that will be filed.

*Official University Degree Plan:* All graduate students are required to file an official degree plan with OGS. The degree plan process is currently completed online. Once the student and advisor are satisfied that all feedback from the student's Program Committee meeting has been incorporated, the student enters the agreed upon sequence of courses and credit-bearing tasks online. Once entered, the document will be reviewed by the department's senior academic advisor who will check to ensure that it meets all TAMU requirements. The plan is then routed electronically to each Program Committee member for approval. Once the Official University degree plan has been approved and filed, any subsequent changes in courses or committee may be made by filing a "petition" which outlines the changes with supporting reasons and is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies. Information about submitting a program plan online can be found at <http://ogs.tamu.edu/forms/current/ogsdpss.pdf>.

### **Core Competencies**

In addition to completing coursework requirements, SPED doctoral students must meet four core competency requirements in the areas of college teaching, grant writing, ongoing collaborative research, and pre-dissertation research (Appendices C & D). These requirements are designed to prepare graduates to be competent and competitive for positions in higher education. Although optional, it is strongly recommended that doctoral students complete a fifth core competency in the area of supervision. All core competencies must be met prior to dissertation defense.

### **First Semester Courses**

A student should consult with his/her advisor to determine first semester (as well as subsequent semester) schedules. Students should register for a minimum of nine (9) credit hours each academic semester (i.e., fall and spring) to ensure full-time status. Priority should be given to required courses that function as prerequisites for program requirements. Elective courses should also be selected in conference with the advisor and, once established, Program Committee. For example, during the first fall semester students should register for the first SPED doctoral seminar (i.e., SPED 618), begin their required statistics sequence (e.g. EPSY 640), and enroll in a course aligned with their area of specialization. Students should refer to the **SPED Ph.D. Program of Study Requirements Checklist** (Appendix C).

### **Additional Program Planning Suggestions**

- Develop an overall plan detailing the semester-by-semester sequence of courses to be taken. Flexibility is necessary as some change in the pattern of course offerings is likely.
- Prerequisite courses should be scheduled early in the program.
- Contact and meet with the faculty advisor prior to registration each semester.



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# PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

Each doctoral student is required to pass a preliminary examination (sometimes referred to as comprehensive exams). The process entails both written and oral examination tasks. A student's chair and Program Committee members will determine the format of the preliminary examination. It is the responsibility of the student, in coordination with his or her chair, to determine each committee member's requirements for the examination.

The oral portion of a student's preliminary examination must be scheduled so that all members of the Program Committee can be present. The substitution of one committee member may be allowed when an absolute necessity. Unless emergency circumstances exist, the Program Committee member who will be absent should make arrangements for the substitution. Note: If a committee chair cannot attend the scheduled examination, or if two (or more) members of the Program Committee will be absent, the examination must be rescheduled.

A preliminary examination is administered no earlier than a date when the student is within six credit hours of completion of formal coursework (except 681, 684, 690, 691 and 692) and no later than the end of the semester following the completion of all formal course work on the degree plan.

Prior to initiating and scheduling a preliminary examination, the student and his or her chair will review TAMU's **Preliminary Examination Checklist** (Appendix E) to ensure that the student has met all eligibility criteria for the examination.

The time span from the first written examination to the oral is no more than three weeks. The head of the student's department has the authority to approve a waiver of this criterion.

The student's chair will report the results of the examination using the Report of Preliminary Examination form (which will include the signatures of all committee members) and the Preliminary Examination Checklist. These forms must be submitted to OGS within 10 working days of the scheduled oral examination date and at least 14 weeks prior to the date of the final examination (i.e., dissertation defense).

After passing the required preliminary examination, the student must complete all remaining requirements for the degree within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student must repeat the examination. If the student fails the preliminary examination, there is no obligation for a re-examination. At their discretion, the student's Program Committee and OGS may allow one re-examination when adequate time has passed to allow the student to address inadequacies emerging from the first examination (normally six months).

**Sample Preliminary Examination Study Guides** (Appendix F) have been developed for many content and specialization areas. These guides are intended to provide examples of potential questions and should not be considered exhaustive. Program committee members will develop and finalize all written and oral preliminary exam questions.

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# CANDIDACY

The following information regarding candidacy is provided by the Office of Graduate Studies' website [http://ogs.tamu.edu/ogs-help-center/tutorial/graduate\\_student\\_handbook/doctoral-degree-information](http://ogs.tamu.edu/ogs-help-center/tutorial/graduate_student_handbook/doctoral-degree-information).

## **Overview**

The student should work closely with his or her chair and consult with members of the dissertation committee to develop a research proposal for the dissertation. Once the research project is fully outlined and has been reviewed by the chair, the student submits a dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee. The student will then schedule a dissertation proposal meeting where the committee will review the appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed research and adequacy of available facilities. The approved proposal, signed by all the members of the dissertation committee and the EPSY department head should be submitted to OGS for final approval. After this, the remaining procedural requirements to earn a Ph.D. include completing the residence requirement, applying for the degree, scheduling and passing a final exam (i.e., dissertation defense), and submitting a signed approval page and PDF file of the completed dissertation to the Thesis Office.

## **Admission to Candidacy**

To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, one must have a cumulative GPR and a degree plan GPR of at least 3.0, satisfy the residence requirement, pass the preliminary examination, complete all formal course work on the degree plan, and have an approved dissertation proposal on file with OGS. A student must be admitted to candidacy well before the date of the final examination. OGS will not authorize a final examination (defense) for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy.

## **Time Limit**

All requirements for the degree must be completed within 10 consecutive calendar years. Further, after passing the required preliminary oral and written examinations for the doctoral degree, the student must complete all remaining requirements for the degree within four calendar years. Otherwise, the preliminary examination must be completed again. Coursework that is more than 10 calendar years old at the time of the final oral examination may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

The student must submit the final corrected dissertation to the Thesis Office no later than one year after the final examination (i.e., dissertation defense) or within the 10-year time limit, whichever occurs first. The degree will not be awarded if these deadlines are not met.

In 1997, the State of Texas passed legislation that limits the number of credit hours beyond the master's degree that the State will financially support. A doctoral student at Texas A&M has seven years to complete his/her degree before being charged out-of-state tuition. After seven years of study, a student who has accumulated 100 or more doctoral hours will be charged tuition at a rate equivalent to out-of-state tuition. Please note that the tuition increases will apply to Texas residents as well as students from other states and countries who currently are charged tuition at the resident rate.

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# DISSERTATION

## **Dissertation Committee**

A dissertation committee includes at least four faculty members with the rank of assistant professor or higher. Three of the members are from the EPSY department (one of whom is the student's advisor/chair) and one from outside the department. Some or all of the student's Program Committee members may continue as dissertation committee members. However, committee membership may change based on the student's dissertation topic. Students should work with their advisor to finalize their dissertation committee.

## **Dissertation Proposal Development and Meeting**

As students begin to formulate ideas and planning dissertation research, they should communicate with their advisor to discuss issues including the appropriateness and feasibility of the topic/scope of research, available resources to complete the research, constitution of the dissertation committee, and proposal development. The student should prepare a written proposal to be presented to the dissertation committee for approval. In most cases, the chair will preview and provide feedback to initial drafts of the student's proposal and indicate when it is suitable for dissemination to the dissertation committee. A written copy of the completed dissertation proposal should be provided to the dissertation committee two weeks prior to the scheduled proposal meeting. It is the student's responsibility to consult with committee members to identify and discuss issues that may need to be resolved prior to the proposal meeting.

## **Research with Human Participants**

Anyone intending to conduct research with human subjects must become familiar with the policies regarding such research and complete the required training to obtain a certificate to work with human participants. All research involving human subjects must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Texas A & M University, regardless of funding sources. More Information about IRB requirements and procedures is available at the Research Compliance Office's website: <http://researchcompliance.tamu.edu/irb/welcome>.

## **Final Oral Defense of the Dissertation**

The student, under the supervision of the chair, should produce an early "polished" draft of the dissertation. Pending chair approval, the student then schedules a tentative defense date and provides a copy to each dissertation committee at least four weeks prior to the tentative defense date. Committee members should review the draft within two weeks and recommend whether the defense should be held. Committee members may provide feedback requiring changes to be made prior to the defense and recommend whether the defense should occur as planned or be rescheduled. The student makes any necessary changes based on feedback received in advance of the defense and must present a final draft of the dissertation to the committee two weeks prior to the scheduled dissertation defense. In addition, the student

works with the EPSY Graduate Academic Advisor to notify the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks before the date of the defense.

### **Dissertation Submission**

Any additional changes in the dissertation that may result from the defense will be made by the student and approved by the chair before it is submitted to the thesis clerk at the library. When submitting signature pages for the EPSY department head's signature, the student should also include a final copy of the dissertation. Allow at least a 48-hour turn around for the department head to review and sign off on the signature pages. It is also a student's responsibility to provide a bound copy of the dissertation to the chair.

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# STUDENT EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Throughout a doctoral student's program, the Special Education Program continually evaluates student progress. Students are expected to maintain high levels of performance in the following areas:

## **Academic Performance**

To remain in good academic standing, doctoral students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average, and maintain continuous enrollment as specified by TAMU's Graduate Catalog. In addition to formal coursework, students must also progress toward completion of the **SPED Core Competencies** (Appendix D). All required competencies must be completed prior to the dissertation defense.

## **Ethical Behavior**

Students will behave in accordance with the ethical standards of the appropriate professional organizations. The Council for Exceptional Children's ethical standards may be found at <http://www.cec.sped.org/>. As doctoral students prepare to become educational researchers, adherence to the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Ethical Standards ([http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/About\\_AERA/Ethical\\_Standards/EthicalStandards.pdf](http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/About_AERA/Ethical_Standards/EthicalStandards.pdf)) is of particular importance. Students are also expected to adhere to the Aggie Honor Code (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/aggiecode>), as promulgated by Texas A&M University.

## **Professional Behavior**

Doctoral students have an obligation to behave in a professional manner. Such professional behavior is exemplified by forming respectful relationships with faculty, staff, other students, school personnel, and other professionals within the community. This expectation extends to students' use of cell phones, instant messaging, email, and social media outlets (including, but not limited to internet communications using message boards, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter).

## **Annual Review of Student Progress**

During each spring semester SPED faculty systematically review each doctoral student in the program. The purpose of this formative assessment is to provide feedback on student progress, identify student strengths and weaknesses, and determine remedial activities or procedures that may be considered with students who are not performing up to program standards. The review focuses on general academic status, core competencies, research, teaching, and service. Students will be prompted by the EPSY Graduate Advisor to submit annual evaluation materials online at [http://www.cehd.tamu.edu/articles/doctoral\\_review](http://www.cehd.tamu.edu/articles/doctoral_review).

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## MAINTAINING ADEQUATE PROGRESS

Students must make adequate progress to remain in good standing in the doctoral program. The SPED program offers the following guidelines for maintaining adequate progress. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will be asked to meet with program faculty to determine a remediation plan as described below.

- Students should be engaged in full-time graduate studies during the academic year (i.e., register for a minimum of 9 credit hours in both fall and spring semesters). Should extenuating circumstances arise, this should be conveyed in advance to the student's advisor and program committee members for approval.
- Students are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their academic advisor and should seek advisement prior to registering for courses and planning research activities each semester. In general, contact with the advisor will be more frequent than once per semester, especially as a student progresses through the program.
- Students must maintain a cumulative GPR of 3.0. In the event that a student's GPR drops below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. The student must raise his/her GPR to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the next 9 hours of coursework. More information can be found in TAMU's Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/>).
- Students must attend to all doctoral program requirements. In addition to successful credit hour production, students must work with their advisors to ensure that their degree plan (a) adheres to the SPED program requirements as summarized in the SPED Ph.D. **Program of Study Requirements Checklist** (Appendix C) and (b) complies with committee recommendations.
- In addition to formal coursework, a doctoral program entails a range of experiences and tasks to equip students with essential competencies required for post-graduation success. It is the student's responsibility to establish a timeline in collaboration with the advisor/Program Committee that ensures the **SPED Core Doctoral Competencies** (Appendix D) are completed prior to the dissertation defense.
- Students must pass all components of their preliminary examination. Per university policy, if a student fails the preliminary examination, there is no obligation for a re-examination. However, at their discretion, the student's advisory committee and OGS may allow one re-examination when adequate time has passed to address the inadequacies emerging from the first examination (normally six months).
- Students should always exhibit ethical and professional behaviors in both on- and off-campus contexts. This expectation extends to student communication and interactions with peers, faculty, staff, and social media outlets (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, message boards, blogs, email communications, etc.).

## **Remediation Process for Failure to Make Adequate Progress**

It is critical that students make adequate progress consistent with program guidelines. Grades of “incomplete” are the rare exception and are given only under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to maintain expectations in one or more of these areas (academic, ethical, and/or professional behavior) will require the student to meet with program faculty. Students will be given an opportunity to explain their circumstances to the faculty. The purpose of this meeting is to identify barriers to progress and to generate a remediation plan and corresponding timeline.

Potential outcomes of this meeting may include:

- a plan for remediation of the problem that is discussed by the faculty and student;
- a formal reprimand from the program—with or without a remediation plan or sanctions;
- probationary status. Such probation will include a written list of behaviors that must be performed by the student during the probationary period and a description of sanctions to occur if the requirements of the probationary period are not met. Such a probation plan will include a specific time frame in which these behaviors must occur.

The sanctions listed above do not have to be applied in any particular order; however, fairness in determining sanction(s) appropriate to the student problem is the goal. Additional departmental expectations and procedures serve as a general guide as well.

## **Academic Probation**

In the event that a student’s cumulative GPR drops below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. Students are required to inform their advisors if they receive a grade of C or below in any course. The student must raise his/her GPR to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the next 9 hours of coursework. More information can be found in TAMU’s Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/>).

## **Dismissal from a Program**

If a student fails to resume adequate progress within the remediation plan timeline, the student will be required to reconvene with program faculty. A potential outcome from this follow-up meeting may be student dismissal from the program. Program dismissal will follow procedures outlined in the Office of Graduate Studies Graduate Advisor Handbook <http://ogs.tamu.edu/faculty>.

## **Leave of Absence**

Under unusual circumstances, a student may petition for a leave of absence from the doctoral program. For information regarding leave of absence, please see the Graduate Catalog <http://catalog.tamu.edu/>



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# DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

## **Student Grievance Process**

In addition to grievance procedures established by the University, the EPSY Department utilizes the following process. An EPSY faculty member selected by the Department Head serves as an Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson serves as an impartial mediator to facilitate conflict resolution between the two parties. In the event of a conflict of interest between a student and the current Ombudsperson, an alternate faculty member may fill this role. There is also an Ombudsperson at the College level, as well as one at the Office of Graduate Studies.

**Prior to Initiation of the Grievance Process** Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve problems by communicating directly with the faculty member. If the student has met with the faculty member and the problem has not been resolved, he/she should contact the EPSY Ombudsperson. If a student chooses not to meet with the faculty member due to the nature of the problem, the Ombudsperson may be contacted directly to initiate the grievance process.

**Overview of Grievance Process** Depending upon the nature of the student's concern, the Ombudsperson may consult with the identified faculty member, the program coordinator or the department head. At the discretion of the department head, the student's concern may be communicated to the College Of Education and Human Development (CEHD) Dean's office. When there is a discussion of a particular faculty-student concern, maintaining anonymity of the student may not be possible; however, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information. Similarly, all activities will be consistent with the requirements and limits set under FERPA with regard to student records.

**University Grievance Procedures.** TAMU articulates students' Rights and Responsibilities and grievance procedures for a variety of problems, issues, and concerns. Students can find this information at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/studentgrievanceprocedures>.

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## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students may find information regarding support services and financial aid by visiting the International Student Services website. <http://international.tamu.edu>

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# STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

## Financial Assistance via Graduate Assistantships

Some students may be employed by the university via a Graduate Assistantship (GA). GA positions of 20 hours a week (or two 10 hour per week positions) provide out-of-state students the ability to pay tuition at the in-state rate and a monthly or biweekly stipend (amount varies by position). Students may be able to locate assistantships in other departments and agencies on campus. Other financial assistance is available through TAMU's Department of Student Financial Aid.

The maximum academic load for students on assistantship (or similarly employed) is 13 credit hours. Individuals who are not working may take more credit hours per semester. A maximum of 16 to 18 credit hours is suggested for those individuals. However, students are encouraged to take lower course loads when possible to enhance the learning process. Students on fellowship are required to take a minimum of nine credit hours during the fall and spring terms. Financial aid programs for graduate students include the Robert T. Stafford Loan (formerly the Guaranteed Student Loan), the Perkins Loan (similar to the GSL), the Hinson-Hazelwood Loan, College Work Study, the Texas Public Education Grant and the State Student Incentive Grant. To be considered for all forms of aid available to graduate students, a student must file either the Financial Aid Form (FAF) or the Family Financial Statement (FFS). Additional information about loans can be found at the following web site: <http://finance.tamu.edu/sbs>.

## Health Insurance

- Those with 20 hour per week graduate assistantships are eligible to purchase health insurance through the university. Information can be found at <http://employees.tamu.edu/>
- Any full time students can purchase student health insurance. More information can be found at <http://www.tamuinsurance.com/>

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### University Student Services

The Division of Student Services is a cluster of administrative departments under the supervision of the Vice President for Student Services. It is designed to serve students at Texas A&M University and includes:

*The Memorial Student Center (MSC)* which combines a beautiful facility and a wide variety of services and programs intended to meet the cultural, social and recreational needs of the university community. This facility includes meeting rooms, printing center, the central ticket office, lounges, a cafeteria and snack bar, bookstore, a music listening room, bowling lanes and art galleries. The MSC Council and Directorate are responsible for producing a wide variety of programs, ranging from ballet to leadership conferences, as well as for providing a laboratory for individual growth and development. All students are invited to become involved in MSC programs and to use the facilities and services of the MSC.

*Office of the Students' Attorney*, which offers legal advice and counseling to all students and recognized student organizations on a variety of matters including landlord/tenant problems, consumer protection, auto accident and domestic relations law.

*Student Counseling Service (University Counseling Center)*, which provides limited duration counseling in the following areas: personal-social; crisis/emergency; marriage/couples; human sexuality; career and group counseling; a career, educational, and personal growth information library; test interpretations; and referral to other services. Confidentiality, to the limits provided for by law and judicial decisions, is maintained.

*Student Activities*, which assists approximately 680 student organizations with organizational development, funding and activities. This office also publishes calendars, handbooks and other publications of an informational nature for the university community.

*Student Affairs*, which is responsible for on-campus housing, off-campus programs, withdrawals, student life, orientation, discipline, and other areas of student concern.

*University Health Service (A.P. Beutel Health Center)*, which provides a modern clinic for outpatient services and beds for 44 inpatients. The facilities of the clinic include a modern laboratory and X-ray, physical therapy, and diagnostic departments. The medical staff includes not only general practitioners, but also consulting specialists in general practice, surgery, orthopedics, urology, gynecology and psychiatry.

The University Health Center is closed during official University holidays. The outpatient clinic is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. For illness requiring medical attention that occurs during hours the clinic is closed, the emergency room of this facility, located on the second floor, remains operable. The Health Center fee entitles the student to clinic visits as needed, most diagnostic examinations, care of illness or accidents, ten days of treatment(s) per semester for cases requiring hospitalization at the university, medications according to pharmacy policy (medications unavailable at the hospital must be purchased by the student), and X-rays and laboratory tests as indicated.

The University Health Center does not perform or provide care for major surgery. In these cases, the student selects the hospital and surgeon and assumes financial responsibility for surgical or medical procedures.

### **Support Services for Students with Disabilities**

Texas A&M University does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to its programs. Otherwise qualified disabled students are offered a variety of forms of assistance through the Office of Support Services for Students with Disabilities located in Cain Hall (Room B118), 845-1637. The office, a component of the Department of Student Affairs, coordinates accommodations that may be needed in academic areas or residence life to permit students with disabilities to successfully pursue a college education. The office also works closely with the Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) to assist students with disabilities.

### **Multicultural Services Center**

The Multicultural Services Center provides retention programs and services for ethnic minority students at Texas A&M, including seven recognized student organizations. The department's multicultural resources include video, audio, and printed material available for staff and student use; outreach programs to faculty and students on cultural diversity and racism in higher education; and Aggie Culture, a monthly newsletter promoting multicultural issues, programs and events. Scholarship/fellowship information, extracurricular and academic counseling, a career development institute, and racial and cultural sensitivity and awareness seminars also are offered by the department. The department also aids the University in its efforts to promote cultural pluralism in academics and extracurricular activities, 845-4551.

### **Additional Sources of Information for Graduate Students in EPSY**

The Office of Graduate Studies Student Handbook includes additional policies that are important for students to know. Especially relevant is information regarding registration (including continuous registration requirements, course load requirements, in-residence registration, *in absentia* registration, and preregistration), time limits for completing degree requirements, scholastic requirements, thesis and dissertation policies, applying for degrees, and confidentiality of student records. This handbook is available in the Graduate Advisor's Office.

### **Departmental Facilities**

The Department of Educational Psychology is housed on the seventh floor in the Harrington Education Center Tower (EDCT). The *Educational Research and Evaluation Laboratory (EREL)* is also found on the seventh floor. This facility is designed to assist faculty and students in research design, statistics, and computer operations. In addition to expert consultation, computer terminals and word processing capabilities are readily available.

### **Educational Psychology Student Organization (EPSO)**

All graduate students in the Department of Educational Psychology are eligible for membership in EPSO. The objectives of EPSO are to foster intellectual and social interactions among students and faculty as well as to provide an opportunity for students' families to interact with each other. In past years, EPSO has sponsored a series of workshops and seminars, trips to conferences, several faculty-student socials and numerous student parties. EPSO members have also been active in campus intramural sports. Money earned through dues and fundraisers support several social functions throughout the year for all graduate students and faculty in educational psychology. More importantly, money may be available to help students defray costs of attending conferences.