

# **Bilingual/ESL Education Master's Student Handbook**

# Bilingual/ESL Education

## Master's Student Handbook

Welcome to Bilingual/ESL Education Programs at Texas A&M University! This booklet will provide new students with information about the online master's program and its courses. Please review this information prior to beginning your program.

*Note: The content in this handbook is for general information purposes. Faculty meets annually to make recommendations for improvement. For any questions, please contact the program director.*

### The Master's Program

The Department of Educational Psychology offers a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Bilingual/ESL Education that requires a minimum of 36 hours of coursework and a passing score on a comprehensive final examination. This non-thesis degree program is delivered via distance education to accommodate working professionals. Graduates are prepared to assume instructional leadership positions focusing on the educational needs of bilingual and dual language learners.

The M.Ed. or M.S. offers a sound combination of theory, methodology, and substantive application, with some coursework flexibility within areas of program emphasis. Prescribed courses may be waived or substituted with committee approval, based on your experience and previous training, or demonstration of required skills. The program develops curriculum theory, instructional content, teaching methodology, accountability/evaluation strategies and family/community partnering.

M.S. students complete a thesis according to university standards and requirements.

M.Ed. students complete a comprehensive examination. The thesis is a formal summary of scholarly investigation involving original data or re-analysis of data originally collected for other purposes. The thesis or comprehensive examination is formally evaluated by your committee and must be presented in your final oral defense.

It is important to note that students are classified as either on-campus or distance students. During the program application process, you will have applied as either an on-campus student or a distance student. Once this decision has been made, you cannot change your classification (although you can still take online or traditional face-to-face courses as needed). Your classification will affect how you are billed and in which course sections you can enroll.

## Your Faculty Advisor

When you receive your letter of acceptance for the program, it will list your temporary faculty advisor. It is recommended that you contact your temporary advisor. You have the option to choose another advisor based on your interests.

## Student's Advisory Committee

After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling for coursework, the student will consult with the head of the department concerning appointment of the chair of his or her advisory committee. The student's advisory committee for the master's degree will consist of **no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty** representative of the student's fields of study and research. The chair or one of the co-chairs of the advisory committee must be from the student's department, and **at least one or more of the members must be from a department other than the student's major department.**

The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve. Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student's advisory committee. Other graduate faculty members located off-campus may serve as a member or co-chair (but not chair), with a member as the chair. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's degree program, has the responsibility for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role, the student is responsible for securing a current member of the University Graduate Faculty, from the student's academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. The Department Head or Chair of Intercollegiate faculty may request in writing to the Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies that a faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence or has voluntarily separated from the university, be allowed to continue to serve in the role of chair of a student's advisory committee without a co-chair for us to one year. The students should be near completion of the degree. Extensions beyond the one-year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

If the chair of the student's advisory committee is unavailable for an extended time in any academic period during which the student is involved in activities relating to an internship, thesis or professional paper and is registered for courses such as 684, 692 or 693, the student may request, in writing, that the department head appoint an alternate advisory committee chair during the interim period.

The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, any professional study or project, and the final examination. In addition, the committee, as a group and as individual members, is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

The committee members' approval on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign *en masse*.

## Degree Plan

You should contact your advisor during your first semester to begin to develop your degree plan.

The student's advisory committee, in consultation with the student, will develop the proposed degree plan. **The degree plan must be completed and filed with the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies prior to the deadline imposed by the student's college, and no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination.**

This proposed degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System located on the website <https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu>. Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition if it is deemed necessary by the advisory committee to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student's Request for Final Examination or Request for Exemption from the Final Examination is approved by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

## Credit Requirement

A minimum of 36 semester credit hours of approved courses is required for the Master of Education degree.

## Transfer of Credit

A student who has earned 12 hours of graduate credit in residence at Texas A&M University may be authorized to transfer courses in excess of the limits prescribed above upon the advice of the advisory committee and with the approval of the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater might be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a

student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Otherwise, the limitations stated in the preceding section apply. Coursework in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit. Courses appearing on the degree plan with grades of D, F or U may not be absolved by transfer work. Credit for thesis research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours or equated to semester credit hours. An official transcript from the university at which the transfer coursework was taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Courses used toward a degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPR.

## **Limitation on the Use of Transfer, Extension and Certain Other Courses**

Some departments may have more restrictive requirements for transfer work. If otherwise acceptable, certain courses may be used toward meeting credit-hour requirements for the master's degree under the following limitations.

1. The maximum number of credit hours which may be considered for transfer credit is the greater of 12 hours or one-third (1/3) of the total hours of a degree plan. The following restrictions apply:
  - Graduate and/or upper-level undergraduate courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution, or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater will be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the student was in degree-seeking status at Texas A&M University, or the student was in degree-seeking status at the institution at which the courses were taken; and if the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution.
  - Courses previously used for another degree are not acceptable for degree plan credit.
2. The maximum number of credit hours taken in post-baccalaureate non-degree (G6) classification at Texas A&M University which may be considered for application to the degree plan is 12.

3. A zero credit 684 and 685 course is only allowed for non-thesis master's students. Other courses, including 691 research hours, are not eligible for zero credit.
4. Any combination of 684, 685 or 690 may not exceed 25 percent of the total credit hour requirement shown on the individual degree plan:
  - A maximum of 8 hours of 684 (Professional Internship) and/or
  - A maximum of 8 hours of 685 (Directed Studies), and
  - Up to 3 hours of 690 (Theory of Research).
5. A maximum of 2 hours of Seminar (681).
6. A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate courses (300- or 400-level).
7. For graduate courses of three weeks' duration or less, taken at other institutions, up to 1 hour of credit may be obtained for each five-day week of coursework. Each week of coursework must include at least 15 contact hours.
8. No credit hours of 691 (Research) may be used.
9. Continuing education courses may not be used for graduate credit.
10. Extension courses are not acceptable for credit.

Exceptions will be permitted only in unusual cases and when petitioned by the student's advisory committee and approved by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

## **Final Examination**

The Final Examination is not required for the Master of Education in Bilingual/ESL Education.

A student pursuing the non-thesis option is not allowed to enroll in 691 (research) for any reason and 691 may not be used for credit toward a non-thesis option Master of Science degree. A maximum of 4 credit hours of 684 (Professional Internship), 8 credit hours of 685 (Directed Studies), and up to 3 credit hours of 690 (Theory of Research) or 695 (Frontiers in Research) may be used toward the non-thesis option Master of Science degree. In addition, any combination of 684, 685, 690 and 695 may not exceed 25 percent of the total credit hour requirement shown on the individual degree plan. All requirements for the non-thesis option Master of Science degree other than those specified above are the same as for the thesis option degree.

## **Thesis or Comprehensive Examination**

The university requires that you complete a final demonstration of learning in the form of a thesis (for thesis-option M.S. students) or comprehensive examination (for M.Ed. students and non-thesis option M.S. students). This work involves an oral defense. You will work closely with your graduate committee to determine the exam date and content of your final examination. The thesis option requires that you develop a thesis proposal, meet with your committee, and receive approval.

### Required Courses M.Ed. & M.S.

(3 credit hours each; 30 hours)

BESL 610: Hispanic Bilingual Assessment and Monitoring Students  
BESL 611: Dual Language Programs Methodologies  
BESL 612: Content Area Instruction for Hispanic Bilingual Programs  
BESL 613: Spanish/English Bilingual  
BESL 614: Bilingual Education Curriculum Development  
BESL 615: Teacher Action Research in Bilingual Education  
BESL 616: Spanish for Bilingual and Dual Language Classrooms  
EPSY 689: SPTP: Understanding Research Consumer Per  
BESL 683: Field Practicum in Bilingual Education  
BESL 685: Directed Studies in Bilingual Education

### Prescribed Elective Courses (M.Ed.)

(3 credit hours each; 6 hours)

BESL 683 Field Practicum in Bilingual Education  
BESL 685 Directed Studies in Bilingual Education

### Prescribed Elective Courses (M.S.)

(6 credit hours)

EPSY 691 Research (Thesis)

### Other Available Courses

Other courses may be considered with the approval of the graduate committee.

(3 credit hours each)

BESL 617: Evaluation of Programs with Bilingual and Language Minority Students K-12 (committee or instructor approval)  
BESL 620: Current Issues in Bilingual Education  
BESL 632: Research in Second Language Education

**M.S. 36 semester credit hours**

**M.Ed. 36 semester credit hours (Online or Face-to-Face)**

### Online Courses & Expectations

All of the courses are completely online and are presented in Canvas. Canvas contains the readings, presentations, discussions, chats, email system, and other items students will need to successfully complete the program.

The coursework is designed to be interactive and completed in a timely fashion over the course of the semester. The following guideline should be considered when taking online courses:

1. Within the first week of school, visit the course site (or attend orientation).
2. Read the course syllabus and any other documents related to the course to be sure you are aware of any and all instructor policies.
3. Adhere to course schedules and deadlines. Distance learning courses are not designed to be self-paced.
4. Participate in weekly online activities, including discussions.
5. Log into the course one or more times per week (preferably daily) to view announcements, participate in class activities, assignments, online discussions, quizzes, and tests.
6. Use the communication procedures established by the instructor for submission of assignments and for completing course requirements.
7. Students should confirm that they have the necessary equipment and technical skills to undertake online courses.
8. Students should familiarize themselves with the information and policies contained in the Graduate Catalog (see <http://catalog.tamu.edu/>) and program-specific student handbook.
9. Assignments submitted to an online course or contributions to threaded discussions must observe the same prohibitions against plagiarism that apply to assignments in classroom courses, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct procedures that are described in the Graduate Catalog.
10. Students should notify their instructor in advance if they are unable to complete an assignment by the published submission deadline.
11. Students should contact their instructor with course-related questions by course email well in advance of due dates, as they may need to wait 48 hours for a response to their questions.
12. If home computer issues occur, students must find time to access a functional computer on campus or in another location. Late policies will not be waived due to home computer issues.
13. Assignments are due at the date and time established by the instructor. These guidelines are strictly enforced.
14. Plan to turn assignments in on time and in the format stipulated by instructors, to participate in class discussions, and to prepare for quizzes and exams.
15. Discussions are part of class participation and must be completed during the week they are assigned.
16. Plagiarism is taken very seriously in the online environment. A first occurrence of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for that assignment. A second offense will be brought to the department head for further disciplinary action that may result in failing the course. It is the student's

responsibility to cite his or her sources and complete coursework in a professional and academically honest manner.

### How to Access Canvas

Canvas can be accessed through <http://canvas.tamu.edu>. You will be prompted for your Net ID and password. It is also available inside the Howdy Portal on the upper banner of the screen.



Division of Information Technology Help Desk: <https://it.tamu.edu/help/>

### Graduation

Once you are close to fulfilling all degree requirements, you should meet with the EPSY graduate advisor and work with the advisor to complete all required paperwork. If you will be completing a thesis, you must meet the submission deadlines established by the Thesis Office. See <http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students/Getting-a-Degree/Master-s-Degree-Requirements>.

The graduate degree is conferred at the close of each regular semester and 10-week summer semester. A candidate for an advanced degree who expects to complete his/her work at the end of a given semester must apply for graduation by submitting the electronic application for degree to the Office of the Registrar and by paying the required graduation fee to Student Business Services no later than the Friday of the fifth week of the fall or spring semester or the Friday of the first week of the second summer term. The electronic application can be accessed via the Howdy portal. A cancellation made after the application deadline will not result in a refund of the diploma fee. Graduate degree candidates who have completed all degree requirements will not be allowed to cancel their graduation application without approval from the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. A student should check the website of the Office of the Registrar at <http://graduation.tamu.edu> to determine the date and time of his/her graduation ceremony.

### Academic Honesty

All Texas A&M students are expected to follow the Aggie Honor Code: *"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do."*

This code also applies to student academic work. All students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity, including — but not limited to — avoiding plagiarism, cheating, complicity, etc. Academic dishonesty will be reported to the Aggie Honor System Office for possible further action. For more information, see <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>.

More information is also available in the Graduate Student Catalog:  
<http://catalog.tamu.edu/>.

For information on how to avoid plagiarism, see  
[http://library.tamu.edu/services/library\\_tutorials/academic\\_integrity/academic\\_integrity\\_3.html](http://library.tamu.edu/services/library_tutorials/academic_integrity/academic_integrity_3.html).

## **Maintaining Adequate Progress**

Students must make adequate progress to remain in good standing in the master's program. The 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 are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their advisor/chair and should seek advisement prior to registering for courses and planning research activities each semester.

For grade purposes, the program follows policies already in place with the department, college, and university.

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 or her GPR to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the next nine hours of coursework. More information can be found in the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/>).

Students must attend to all program requirements. In addition to successful credit hour completion, students must work with their advisor/chair to ensure that their degree plan (a) adheres to the program requirements and (b) complies with committee recommendations.

Per university regulation, master's students have seven years to complete their program. Students who are not enrolled for three consecutive semesters are withdrawn from the program.

## **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. In the event a student is not making adequate progress, he or she will be given an opportunity to explain the 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; and/or 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 or her GPR to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the next nine hours of coursework. More information can be found in the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/>).

### **Dismissal from the 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 Graduate Advisor Handbook:

<http://ogaps.tamu.edu/OGAPS/media/media-library/documents/Forms%20and%20Information/OGAPS-Advisor-Handbook-Online>.

### **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, see the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/>).

## **Student Grievance Process**

In addition to the grievance procedures established by the university (see <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/studentgrievanceprocedures>), the department has developed, after extensive student and faculty input, the following process. It is known as the Student Advocate Office. An EPSY faculty member selected by the department head serves as the ombudsperson. Currently, Dr. Laura Stough serves in this capacity.

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 (Dr. George Cunningham), as well as one at OGAPS (see <http://ogaps.tamu.edu/New-Current-Students/Ombudsperson>). The following policies were derived by EPSY faculty, students, and the department head:

### **Pre-condition to Student's Initiation of the Grievance Process**

Students are encouraged to meet with and attempt to resolve problems with the faculty member. If the student has met with the faculty member and the problem has not been resolved, he or she should contact the ombudsperson. If a student does not choose to meet with the faculty member due to the nature of the problem, he or she may directly contact the ombudsperson and initiate the grievance process.

### **Overview of Grievance Process**

A student who has a faculty-student concern and who has addressed the preconditions for initiation of the grievance process is encouraged to meet with the ombudsperson; however, a student may choose to meet first with other EPSY faculty member(s). 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 CEHD Dean's Office. When there is a discussion of a particular faculty-student concern, maintaining anonymity of the student may not be possible. Similarly, all activities will be consistent with the requirements and limits set under FERPA with regard to student records.

### **Resolution of Student Concerns**

Resolution of a student's concern may occur as a result of:

1. Student's dialogue with the faculty member or the ombudsperson.
2. Ombudsperson holds discussions with the faculty member.
3. Ombudsperson's discussion of the student's concern with the program coordinator or the department head. As a result of these discussions, the ombudsperson, and/or the department head may confer with the faculty member.
4. Pending the outcome of the above mentioned, or the nature of the student's concern, the department head, and/or student may enter into discussion with the CEHD Dean's Office and appropriate university committees and administrators.

## **Additional Requirements**

### **Residence**

The distance education modality does not have any residence requirement.

### **Time Limit**

All degree requirements must be completed within a period of seven consecutive years for the degree to be granted. A course will be considered valid until seven years after the end of the semester in which it is taken. Graduate credit for coursework which is more than seven calendar years old at the time of the final examination (oral or written) may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

## Foreign Languages

No specific language requirement exists for the Master of Education degree.

## Internship or Practicum

A student who undertakes a professional internship in partial fulfillment of master's degree requirements after completing all course requirements for the master's degree must return to the campus for the final examination. The final examination is not to be administered until all other requirements for the degree, including any internship, have been substantially completed.

## Application for Degree

For information on applying for your degree, please visit the [Graduation](#) section.

## The Department of Educational Psychology

The Department of Educational Psychology is one of four departments in the College of Education & Human Development. These departments include:

- Education Administration & Human Resource Development (EAHR)
- Educational Psychology (EPSY)
- Health & Kinesiology (HLKN)
- Teaching, Learning, & Culture (TLAC)

The heads of the various departments work with the dean of the college on matters of departmental or college interest. Graduate students within the College of Education & Human Development (CEHD) are also subject to the administrative oversight of the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (OGAPS).

At the graduate level, the department offers the Master of Science, Master of Education, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. Doctoral specializations include school psychology; counseling psychology; bilingual/ESL education; learning sciences; and special education. At the master's level, specializations include bilingual education, educational technology, special education, and learning sciences. EPSY also offers undergraduate degrees in bilingual education and special education for pre-service teachers.

## How to Contact the Bilingual/ESL Education Programs

Dr. Yolanda N. Padrón, Professor  
Master's Program Coordinator  
Email: [ypadron@tamu.edu](mailto:ypadron@tamu.edu)

**Mailing Address:** Department of Educational Psychology  
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## EPSY Graduate Advisor

The graduate advisor for the Department of Educational Psychology (EPSY) is Sally Kallina. She can help you with questions about scheduling, degree plans, graduation, etc.



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## Program Faculty



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### Research Interests

Bilingual assessment and evaluation  
Bilingual pedagogy  
Theory and validation  
Bilingual content areas of instruction  
Dual Language Education  
Hispanic parental involvement  
Hispanic gifted identification  
International bilingual education  
Multicultural education



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### Research Interests

Bilingual education  
Classroom instruction for second  
language students  
Classroom observations  
Content Area Instruction  
Professional Development for  
Teachers of ELs  
Resiliency  
At-risk students  
Reading strategies



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**Research Interests**  
 Experimental research design and  
 quantitative methodology in  
 bilingual/ESL education  
 Program evaluation in bilingual/ESL  
 education  
 Literacy and science integration for  
 ELs  
 Bilingual education in an international  
 Context  
 Second language acquisition and  
 assessment



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**Research Interests**  
 Biliteracy Development in PK-12  
 Teacher Instruction Leadership and  
 Effective Instructional Practices in  
 Bilingual Education  
 Bilingual Education Teacher  
 Preparation Models



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**Research Interests**  
 Language brokering  
 Oral proficiency  
 Teacher effectiveness  
 Teacher preparation  
 Vocabulary development within the  
 field of bilingual education



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**Research Interests**  
 Child and community development  
 Classroom learning environments  
 Efficacy of school programs  
 Teacher professional development in  
 urban and rural settings



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### **Research Interests**

#### **Research Interests**

Instructional Pragmatics  
ESL/EFL Teacher Education  
Intercultural Communication  
Intercultural Pragmatics  
Sociocultural aspects of Second  
Language Acquisition  
English Medium Instruction  
Teaching English in Intercultural and  
International settings Biliteracy  
Development