

SPECIALIST CANDIDATE HANDBOOK INTRODUCTION

This *Handbook* has been published to help students and faculty in the planning and execution of the EdS program at Andrews University, College of Education and International Services. It does not supersede the *Andrews University Bulletin*.

Questions not answered in this *Handbook*, or the *College of Education and International Services Bulletin* may be referred to the CEIS Graduate Programs Office.

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Alayne Thorpe, Dean
Anna Piskozub, Accr. Assm. Graduate Records Officer

Graduate Programs
College of Education and International Services
269-471-3109
sedgradprograms@andrews.edu

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**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL SERVICES
EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST PROGRAM**

Please Note:

Approved papers/forms are filed with Graduate Records Officer,
College of Education and International Services, Bell Hall Room 151

COURSE WORK

1.1 Focus of the Degree

- A. The EdS degree prepares personnel for leadership and specialized positions in education. It builds upon the master's degree in providing a focused program of study. In some cases, the specialist program accommodates persons desiring career shifts and advancement in certification. A dissertation and advanced research course work are not required.
- B. The EdS requires a minimum of 64 semester graduate credits beyond the baccalaureate degree. The EdS School Psychology program allows students to transfer up to 20% of equivalent courses. Fieldwork experiences are not transferable. Specific departmental requirements determine the nature and sequence of course work prescribed as part of the program.
- C. The specialist program focuses more on practice and less on research than the doctorate. It does not require a dissertation or advanced research course work. If admission criteria to a doctoral program are met, credits earned in the specialist program may be applied toward doctoral study at the discretion of the department(s) evaluating credits for acceptance.
- D. If you now intend to pursue a doctoral degree, it is imperative that you communicate your intentions as soon as possible to your advisor. Many of the requirements connected with the doctoral degree may only be met after admission to the doctoral program. If you wait to apply to the doctoral program until after completing the EdS, it may take you longer to complete the doctorate than if you applied while still in the EdS program. Students intending to complete the doctorate are usually better off applying to the EdD or PhD program within the first two semesters of coursework and then completing the EdS enroute to the EdD/PhD program.

1.2 Admission Status

A. Regular

If you meet all admission requirements of the College of Education and International Services and the specific requirements of the department in which you propose to study, you are eligible for regular status.

B. Provisional

If you do not meet all the requirements for regular admission, but in the judgment of the proper department show the ability to successfully undertake the proposed program, you are eligible for provisional status. At the time of provisional admission, the department specifies the nature of any deficiencies and the plan and deadline for their removal. The class load limit for students on provisional status is usually no more than 9 credits. However, departments may impose a class load limit of less than 12 credits for provisional students if it is deemed necessary. If you fail to meet prescribed specifications, you may be dropped from the program.

1.3 Minimum Admission Requirements

To qualify for regular admission to the EdS program, you must submit official, final transcripts of all previous undergraduate and graduate work taken and meet **all** the general standards:

- A. A master's degree in an area appropriate to the major emphasis of the specialist program from a regionally accredited American university or senior college, or its equivalent from a comparably recognized institution outside the U.S. Students with a good academic record may enter without a master's degree into the EdS, School Psychology, provided the applicant has an accredited undergraduate degree with a major in psychology, education or a related field, and an undergraduate GPA of 3.00. At least 20 undergraduate psychology credits for the EdS, School Psychology program. (See, AU 2023-2024 Bulletin, [Doctoral and Advanced Degrees](#).)
- B. Evidence of ability to pursue advanced study in post-master's-level work with a cumulative graduate grade-point average of at least 3.20 on a 4.00 system.
- C. GRE scores are required for Graduate Psychology and Counseling, School of Education but not for Leadership.
- D. Adequate undergraduate and/or graduate preparation in the proposed field of graduate study and general education. Assessment of preparation is done by your department.
- E. Evidence of ability to handle specialist-level work in the English language. If your first language is not English, you must submit a satisfactory TOEFL, IELTS (Academic) score or successfully complete Intensive English Program on campus and pass the Exit Exam for English as a Second Language. (See AU 2023-2024 Bulletin, [English Proficiency Requirements](#).)
- F. A minimum of three satisfactory recommendations showing strong potential for educational leadership and service.
- G. A written statement of purpose for graduate study in the EdS program.

1.4 Academic Advisement

Your initial contact is with the department chair/coordinator. During your first registration semester you will need to select a permanent advisor. Your advisor's major task is to counsel you about academic requirements and expectations and to approve a course plan for you which meets these requirements.

1.5 Specialist Program Course Work

A. Course Numbering/Levels

500-699: Courses for graduate students only
700-999: Courses for post-master's students only

B. Program Course Work Requirements

Plan your program carefully with your advisor. After admission to the EDS program at Andrews University, fulfill the minimum of required credits as per advisement. Fieldwork experiences are not transferable. Check the College of Education and International Services section [of AU 2023-2024 Bulletin](#) for department requirements (See *your specific program requirements*.) Requirements may include:

1. Educational foundation courses:
 - a) EDFN 500- Philosophical Foundation for Professionals – 2 or 3 courses-must be taken at Andrews University

- b) One graduate course in the following areas: Philosophical, Psychological, Sociological and Theological. The specific courses that are accepted are listed below –

Philosophical

EDCI 547 – Foundations of Curriculum Studies: - 3

Psychological

GDPG 514 – Psychology of Learning

GDPG 525 – Psychology and Education of Exceptional Children: - 3

GDPG 634 – Cognitive and Biological Psychology: - 3

2. Successful completion of a written comprehensive examination/portfolio as prescribed by your department (See your program requirements).
3. A minimum of two years of appropriate work experience in education before completing your program. Individual departments will determine the appropriateness of the experience.

1.6 Transfer of Credits

All graduate credits taken at Andrews University or another accredited university that are considered appropriate by your adviser and department chair/coordinator are transferable, but not all may count toward minimum course requirements. The grade earned in each transfer course must be at least a B (3.00 GPA). Permission to transfer credits taken at another university is granted only by transfer credit petition and upon receipt of an official transcript for the course(s) in question.

Candidates wishing to take courses from another university to fulfill curriculum requirements, after acceptance into a specialist program, must petition for approval **before** taking the courses to be transferred.

Submit courses that you wish to have transferred on a "Graduate Transfer Petition" form to your adviser, the department chair/coordinator, and the Dean for approval.

Please note that graduate credits received from institutions generally considered to be diploma/degree mills are not eligible to be transferred into a degree program.

A. Guest Student

You may be allowed to take classes on a Guest Student Status before you are officially accepted into a program. After you are accepted into the graduate program only up to 8 credits may count toward your degree. To transfer courses taken on a Guest Student Status into your program, you must submit a petition that is approved by your advisor, your department chair/coordinator, and the Dean of the College of Education and International Services. This petition should be filled during the first semester of coursework.

1.7 Transfer of Degree Program

A. From One Specialist Program to Another

Acceptance into a specialist program in the College of Education and International Services does not include the option of automatic transfer to another specialist program later. Students already accepted into a specialist program who wish to transfer to another specialist degree program in the same department, must request a Change of Program through the Graduate Enrollment Office. This request will need to be approved by the department chair/coordinator and the Graduate Programs Office. You may need to submit new recommendations and Statement of Purpose. At the time of reapplication for transfer, advisors will reevaluate your current program and adjust for the new program requirements. Following that reevaluation, those courses that are relevant to the new program may be transferred.

B. From Doctoral to Specialist Program

Students already accepted into a doctoral program who wish to transfer to the specialist degree program in the same department, must request Change of Program through Graduate Enrollment Office. This request will need to be approved by the department chair/coordinator and the Graduate Programs Office. Students must follow the current *Bulletin* and submit a new Statement of Purpose and may be required to submit new recommendations.

C. Application to Doctoral Program from Specialist Program

Admission to a doctoral program, after completing the specialist program, requires a complete online application process. We urge you to apply as soon as possible and not wait until you have completed the specialist program. Admission to a doctoral degree requires completing an online application.

1.8 Second EdS Degree Program

If you have already completed an EdS degree, you may apply for acceptance into a new EdS program providing you meet the department requirements for admission and providing the proposed course of study is not within the same major field completed. The usual regulations and limits of transferring credits apply when taking a second specialist degree.

1.9 Student Responsibility for Bulletin Requirements

You should become familiar with the regulations governing academic matters. The College of Education and International Services section in the AU Bulletin covers general questions about academic policies that you are to observe. Although the policies of the Bulletin have the weight of faculty action, practice and precedent, occasionally special circumstances may suggest an exception. The petition process handles such circumstances through the Graduate Programs Office.

1.10 Bulletin Applicability

You may choose the requirements of any Bulletin in force after your official acceptance as long as you remain active in your program. Specialist degree students maintain continuous registration-active status by enrolling for at least one semester credit for every fall and spring semester until they complete all requirements for their degree. Students pursuing a degree during summer sessions only must be enrolled every summer in order to maintain active status in the program ([AU 2023-2024 Bulletin](#)). If a break of enrollment occurs or you are placed on inactive status, you must meet the requirements of the Bulletin in effect after enrollment resumes.

1.11 Time Limits

You must complete the degree requirements within six calendar years from the beginning of the first semester of class work irrespective of admission classification.

1.12 Continuous Registration – Active/Inactive Status

To maintain active status in the specialist program before passing the comprehensive examination, you must maintain continuous registration. (Educational Leadership and Leadership students, refer to the Leadership section on continuous registration.) Continuous registration in the Graduate Psychology and Counseling requires enrollment for classes two out of three terms (semester or summer) during the school year. Two semesters with no credits will cause the student to be placed on inactive status unless the student has communicated valid reasons for the lack of progress in his/her program. Students in Curriculum and Instruction must continuously register in at least one credit for every fall and spring. Candidates who do not have continuous registration and become inactive must reapply to the department to be placed on active status.

After deactivation, you must request reactivation through the department before you may continue in your specialist program. Students who request reactivation will be charged an appropriate reactivation fee ([AU 2023-2024 Bulletin](#)). Upon reactivation, you must meet the requirements of the *Bulletin* in force at that time.

1.13 Registration & Loan Deferment/Visa

Enrollment is necessary to get loan deferment. For students who still have classes to take for the degree, full time is one of the following two options:

1. Registering for 8 or more credits of course work and/or internship (GDPC810).
 - a. registering for 1 or more credits of internship.
 - b. completing "full-time work on the internship as defined by at least 24 hours per week or 720 hours per year."

For students who have completed all required classes for the degree except internship, full time status must be maintained by one of the following:

1. register for 1 or more credits of internship, do "full-time" work on the internship as defined by a minimum of 24 hours per week.
2. register for program continuation (see your program handbook).

1.14 Standards of Scholarship

A. Schedule of Studies

You must fulfill satisfactorily the schedule of studies outlined in your "Advancement to Degree Candidacy" (see **Advancement to Degree Candidacy**) form as submitted and approved.

B. Provisional Status

If you have provisional status:

1. Due to low admission GPA standards or GRE, you must achieve a cumulative Andrews University grade-point average of 3.20 for the first 9 -12 credits after acceptance in courses graded A-F to continue in the program.
2. Because of English language deficiencies, you must meet the minimal English language proficiency requirement by the time you have completed no more than 50 percent of your coursework or suspend progress in your graduate program until the deficiency has been removed.
3. Because GRE scores were not submitted, you must submit official scores within the first semester of coursework.

If you are on provisional status, you may not register for independent study or workshop credits, advance to degree candidacy, or take the comprehensive examination.

C. Grade-Point Average

To remain in the program, you must maintain a grade-point average of 3.20 overall and in your major or concentration. Only grades of B- or better count toward the major or concentration. Although C grades are permitted outside the major, an overall grade-point average of 3.20 or better must be maintained.

No grade of D or F may count toward a degree. If you repeat a course, the old grade is excluded on the transcript and the new grade is included. Accumulation of more than three grades below a B- (including U), normally terminates your enrollment.

D. Academic Probation

If the cumulative grade-point average in your EdS course work at Andrews University drops below 3.20 in any given semester, you will be placed on academic probation. You and your advisor must develop a plan to raise your grade-point average above 3.20, normally within the next semester. The Graduate Programs Office must approve this plan.

When your cumulative grade-point average again reaches 3.20, the Graduate Programs Office will reinstate your regular status. However, if you have not reached the minimum grade-point average within the time limits stated in the approved plan, you may be dropped from the program.

If you are on academic probation, you may not register for independent study or workshop credits, advance to degree candidacy, or take the comprehensive examination.

E. Other Standards

1. The EdS degree does not accept credit by examination or work experience.
2. You must successfully pass the comprehensive examination.

1.15 Satisfactory Academic Progress

For full information concerning Satisfactory Academic Progress required for continued financial aid eligibility, read the AU 2023-2024 Bulletin [*Graduate Financial Assistance*](#).

ADVANCEMENT TO DEGREE CANDIDACY

2.1 Procedure

Upon completion of 75 percent of your course work and no later than one month before taking the comprehensive examination, you should file the "[Advancement for Degree Candidacy](#)" form. The ATC forms must be:

- A. Completed by you,
- B. Approved by your advisor and department chair/coordinator, and
- C. Returned to the Graduate Programs Office.

The Application for [Advancement to Degree Candidacy](#), and [Application for Comprehensive Exam](#) forms can be accessed by clicking on it.

The [ATC Degree Course Plan Template for School Psychology](#) can be accessed at the above link. For other course plans, contact your Academic Advisor.

2.2 Application

At the time you file "Advancement to Degree Candidacy" you should

- A. Have completed all deficiencies that may have existed,
- B. Have shown language proficiency where required,
- C. Be on regular status, and
- D. Have maintained a cumulative grade-point average of 3.20 or higher.
- E. Applied for graduation at Andrews University [website](#).

2.3 Approval

Once your Advancement to Degree Candidacy has been checked and all signatures of approval have been obtained, you may take the comprehensive exam. Again, this should be done the semester before the comprehensive examination is taken. If you have made any changes in your coursework since your approved Advancement to Degree Candidacy you must submit the "Program Change Request" form. Only after you have made the necessary changes to the Advancement to Degree Candidacy, and you have met the minimum program requirements you will be approved for graduation.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

3.1 Purpose

EdS students are required to take prescribed written comprehensive examinations or portfolio presentations as required by the program.

EdS students are permitted to sit for comprehensive examinations after all coursework is completed and after applying for degree candidacy.

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to appraise your overall grasp of your chosen discipline and expertise in the area of concentration. The examinations will cover the field of study irrespective of the courses taken.

3.2 Application

Application for the Comprehensive Exam form and the *Application for Advancement to Degree Candidacy* form are filled together prior to the comprehensive examination. You will not be permitted to sit for the examination until you have been advanced officially. Some programs may require a project; therefore, you should consult your program *Handbook for Educational Specialist* for further information.

The comprehensive examination is normally taken after you have completed all coursework. To apply to take the comprehensive examination, you must complete the "*Advancement to Degree Candidacy*" and "*Application for the Comprehensive Examination*" forms. However, there are three options you may choose from to take your exam:

- A. after completing all your course work
- B. during the semester you are concluding your course work
- C. no later than two semesters after completing the course work specified on your course plan

All course work and the comprehensive examination must be completed within six years of initial registration for Andrews University course work.

Courses covered in the comprehensive examination must have all I (Incomplete) and DG (Deferred Grade) grades cleared before administration of the comprehensive examination.

3.3 Nature

The examination consists of two parts, one general and one specialized. Each examination takes three hours but may take as long as four hours, if necessary. EdS candidates should refer to their specific departmental handbook for details concerning their examination.

The department faculty prepares the examination and provides you with exam objectives.

3.4 Scheduling and Time Allowances

The comprehensive examination is normally taken during the last semester of course work and as scheduled on specific dates each semester (see *Academic Calendar*). **You are required to submit your "Advancement to Degree Candidacy" and have it approved no later than the semester prior to taking the comprehensive examination, or you will not be permitted to sit for this examination.**

Exams are arranged through the Learning Hub or are proctored through DLiT.

3.5 Grading and Reporting

Each comprehensive examination is evaluated as a whole and graded as "pass," "pass subject to satisfactory follow-up examination (oral or written)," or "no pass." You may take the examination(s) only once more, at the

regularly scheduled time. Failing the second time may result in termination from the program.

The Graduate Programs Office will officially notify you of your performance on the comprehensive examination within three weeks.

3.6 Time Limits

All course work and compressive exam must be completed within 6-years of initial EdS courses registration at Andrews University.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Application for Graduation

It is your responsibility to submit a [Graduate Application for Graduation Form](#). This form must be submitted online before no later than the date specified in the [academic calendar](#) to avoid late fee. Graduation Applications in paper form will not be accepted. If you have any questions, contact Academic Records at (269-471-3375).

All students filing for December conferral must complete the Graduation/Marching application no later than the date specified in the academic calendar. All graduate students applying for graduation/marching in May must complete the Graduation/Marching application no later than the date specified in the published [Academic Calendar](#).

If you have missed the deadlines, you must file a new application for degree conferral/graduation for the next regularly scheduled time.

4.2 Completion of Program Requirements

You must complete all program requirements and receive financial clearance from the Student Finance Office one week before commencement.

4.3 Graduation Regalia

Graduation regalia are ordered online through the Herff Jones Inc., [Academic Regalia](#) website. Regalia are ordered by degree, not major. Be sure you know your degree. If you have questions, please contact the Records Office or Graduate Records Officer in the College of Education and International Services.

4.5 Lodging

The Guest/Convention Services office is open seven days a week. To make a reservation, call 1-269-471-3360, or email lodging@andrews.edu. Reservations should be made as early as possible--it will be a busy weekend! (Some make campus guest room reservations a year in advance for this weekend) Hotels are available within a range of 10-20 miles. For more complete lodging and transportation information, see the AU Website at [Visiting](#).

4.6 Graduation Schedule

It is a full weekend. Rehearsal practice is Thursday evening. There are ceremonies Friday evening, Saturday morning and Sunday morning.

4.7 Conferral of Degree

Conferrals of degrees are awarded when you have successfully completed all degree requirements. There are two commencement services each year, scheduled for May and August. Degree conferral without the graduation ceremony is available in December.

4.8 Graduation in Absentia

At the time of application for graduation/marching, students who choose not to march must indicate that they are graduating in absentia. Those who complete all degree requirements and choose to graduate in absentia forfeit their right to participate in a later graduation ceremony. You may graduate in absentia by indicating your request to the Records Office (269-471-3375).

CANDIDATE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

If you find yourself in conflict with the resolution of a complaint or questioning a practice or decision that you believe unnecessarily impacts you adversely, you may seek to have your situation considered, improved or settled by following the steps in the order outlined below. The nature of the conflict will, in part, determine the procedure to follow. Fundamental to any procedure, however, is the basic commitment to Christian principles.

5.1 Candidate Complaint Procedure

If you feel that your academic rights have been violated, you should speak directly with the relevant professor. If you are dissatisfied with the professor's response, you may appeal to the department chairperson. Following a decision by the department chairperson, you (or the professor) may appeal to the appropriate academic dean, followed by an appeal to the Office of the Provost. (Refer to *2023-2024 Student Handbook*.)

5.2 Resolution of Grade Disputes

In keeping with the Andrews University Working Policy (2:437:6), if you dispute a grade received for a course (providing that you believe the grade was assigned because of **carelessness, arbitrariness, or capriciousness**), you should seek a resolution within one semester through the following steps:

1. You should seek a resolution in person with the instructor of the course.
2. If the dispute is not resolved, you may file a written grade complaint with the instructor's immediate supervisor, normally the department chair. The immediate supervisor must render a written report of his/her findings within a week.
3. If you do not receive a report or remain dissatisfied, you may file a written grade grievance with the Dean of the College of Education and International Services. Should the Dean be the instructor in question, the dean shall direct the grade grievance to the provost.
4. After reviewing all the facts about the case, the Dean or the Provost may choose to issue a final decision in the case or appoint a Grade Review Committee of three Faculty members, who will investigate the matter and recommend a resolution to the Dean or the Provost.
5. The Dean or the Provost will then issue a final decision, considering the recommendations of the Grade Review Committee.

5.3 Resolution of All Other SED Complaints

Please use the following protocol in dealing with all other complaints:

1. If applicable, you may first consult with your instructor or advisor.
2. If your complaint remains unresolved, you may discuss it with the department chair
3. If the issue is still unresolved, you may submit a written complaint to the SED Dean.
4. If the issue remains unresolved, you may discuss the matter with the provost who will provide a written decision which will be considered final.

At any point in the complaint process you may consult with either of two University Ombudspersons whose role is to facilitate understanding, communication, and resolution of conflicts. They may help by identifying and explaining relevant university policies, procedures, and problem-solving channels. The Ombudspersons will also help you to explore options or help identify University programs and resources that might be of benefit. The Ombudspersons do not get involved in:

- Legal advice or legal representation
- Non-University related disagreements or problems
- Filing grievances or making formal complaints
- Representation of students in formal University procedures (See "Ombudspersons" in the current *Student Handbook*.)

APPENDIX

Specialist Forms

Click on the following links to access downloadable forms that can be filled out online and e-mailed directly to your advisor for approval. All forms are in Portable Document Format (PDF). Need Adobe Reader? Follow the link below. If for some reason you have a problem with any of the forms below, please e-mail sedgradprograms@andrews.edu .



- [Application for New Advisor](#)
- [Graduate Petition](#)
- [Instruction on How to File Advancement to Degree Candidacy](#)
- [Application for Advancement to Degree Candidacy](#)
- [Application for Comprehensive Examination](#)
- [Petition - Transfer Credits](#)
- [Plan for Probation Status Removal](#)